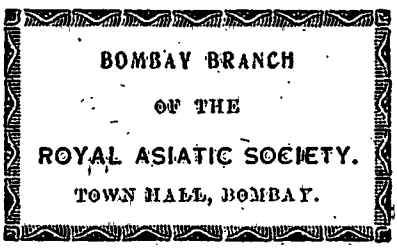
NOT TO BE ISSUED
OUT OF THE LIBRARY.



Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 25 June, 2016

THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE COURT OF BERLIN;

OR,

THE CHARACTER OF THE PRESENT KING OF PRUSSIA, HIS MINISTERS, MISTRESSES, GENERALS, COURTIERS, FAVOURITES, AND THE ROYAL FAMILY OF PRUSSIA.

With numerous Anecdotes of the Potentates of Europe, especially of the late Frederic II. and an interesting Picture of the State of Politics, particularly in Prussia, Russia, Germany, and Holland.

In a Series of Letters, translated from the French.

A POSTHUMOUS WORK.

37574 ac

TO WHICH IS ADDED

A MEMORIAL, presented to the present King of Prussia, on the Day of his Accession to the Throne,

By COUNT MIRABEAU.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED FOR S. BLADON, PATER-NOSTER-ROW.

MDCCLXXXIX.

THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE COURT OF BERLIN.

00037574

FRENCH-EDITOR's

PREFACE.

THE letters which compoſe this collection were found ſcattered among papers, on various ſubjects, of a traveller who died laſt year, in the remote parts of Germany, at ſome unknown village. They not only contain a great number of curious facts, that relate to the death of Frederick the Great, and the beginning of the reign of his ſucceſſor, but portraits alſo of the principal perſons ſtill in power at the court of Berlin, as faithfully as they are forcibly depicted, if we may believe the moſt indubitable of witneſſes, time, which has confirmed the greateſt part of the predictions of the author of theſe letters.

We have ſuppoſed a collection like this, valuable as it is in itſelf, is peculiarly ſo at this moment. The agitation of the North, the circumſtances which have given the court of Berlin an influence ſo unforeſeen, and ſo pro-

prodigious, the very great neceſſity there is that France ſhould take a part in the formidable contentions on which the fate of Germany depends, in fine, the probability that the French States General will demand information from government, relative to the alliances and political engagements of the nation, though it were only to determine on poſſible æconomy, and neceſſary expences, which determination ſuppoſes a very ſevere enquiry into the motives for diminiſhing or augmenting the army, theſe ſeverally concur to render thoſe opinions intereſting which may and ought to actuate the French, either to ſupport the Auſtrian ſyſtem or to defend the freedom of Germany.

TRANS.

TRANSLATOR's

PREFACE.

HAVING thought the following work deſerving the trouble of tranſlation, and worthy to be known, both by thoſe who wiſh to ſtudy the human heart and thoſe who intereſt themſelves concerning that ſpecies of occupation, among men, which is dignified with the title of the Science of Politics, I ſhall, for the better information of the reader, give a ſhort account of the book and of its author, as far as relates to the ſubject in queſtion.

That the author is Count Mirabeau no perſon at preſent doubts. The circulatory letter (*a*) he himſelf has ſent, to the various Gazettes of Europe, with a pretended renunciation of the book, is equivalent

(*a*) Voyez le Courier de Londres, du 18 Mars, 1789.

to an avowal of being himſelf the writer. He is or lately has been canvaſſing in Provence, to be returned a member of the States General; and, whether he imagined the diſgrace which ſome would annex to ſuch a publication might injure his election, whether he himſelf has the weakneſs to bluſh at what ought to have been an act of deliberation or ought not to have been acted, or whether he be compelled to aid ſome artifice of politics, for politics has many an artifice that ſurpaſſes all underſtanding, it is difficult to determine. If Count Mirabeau publiſhed his book from motives either of petty vanity, petty revenge, or to ſerve any other equally petty purpoſe, that he ſhould then be aſhamed would but be natural. But, if he had the nobler intention of teaching mankind how to judge, and conſequently how to beware, of courts, and the poor ſubtleties of men who wiſh to govern the world by cunning inſtead of juſtice (I ſay of juſtice, for juſtice is the ſum and ſubſtance of all the virtues, and whatever is not juſtice is either vice or folly) if he wiſhed to teach the comprehenſive

prehenſive mind the true art of governing, by giving examples of the falſe; if he were deſirous to expand the wings of wiſdom, and aid in diffuſing happineſs over the earth, his letter and his bluſhes, if bluſh he does, are his diſgrace. True it is that the work itſelf proves him to be an unequal man; frequently capable of deſpiſing what is deſpicable, yet ſometimes alike capable of practiſing what he deſpiſes; occaſionally with views ſo independent, dignified, and comprehenſive, as to enforce admiration and applauſe; at others diſplaying vanity, forming ſchemes, and ſtooping to arts, that excite pity and diſguſt. But men even of great talents are generally incongruous, paradoxical: few only are uniform in ſuperior wiſdom, and Count Mirabeau is not yet one of theſe few. His book is notwithſtanding an extraordinary and inſtructive performance.

This book has been what is called *condemned by the laws*, in France; had its funeral oration pronounced by the King's advocate, M. Seguier, and been honourably burnt by the common hangman.

 Yes,

Yes, honourably; for no book which was in itſelf inſignificant ever yet attained that diſtinction.

It appears ſomewhat ænigmatical that the King's advocate and the parliament of Paris ſhould with ſuch facility take it for granted, as in the ſentence pronounced againſt the work they do, that the letters are written by Nobody, and that this Nobody is dead, becauſe it is ſo affirmed in the title page. There is great reaſon to imagine they would have been ſomewhat more difficult of belief, had not their creed been compoſed according to ſome of thoſe very ſcientific political artifices which have before been glanced at. The court knew, the miniſtry knew, the advocate knew, the parliament knew, that Count Mirabeau had reſided at Berlin, at the period correſponding to the date of the letters, and in the capacity the letters themſelves deſcribe; that his viſits had been encouraged by Prince Henry and his party, with whom he had lived in intimacy, and that he had written the two memorials to be found at the beginning of the firſt and the end

of the ſecond volume, and the *Hiſtoire de la Monarchie Pruſſienne*. The laſt memorial and the hiſtory, which are frequently referred to in the work, had for ſome time paſt been publiſhed with his name. Yet the advocate Seguier and the parliament were ignorant who was the author of the letters. Nay they did not ſo much as know by whom they were printed or publiſhed. Neither author, printer, nor place of ſale, ſay they in their arret, is named in the title page. Ignorance ſo convenient explains itſelf. The whole political vocabulary riſes to view. Alliance! Holland! Engliſh influence! Ballance of power! France! The Emperor! Ruſſia and Denmark! Sweden and Turkey! Pruſſia and Poland!! All ideas in a train, with the politicians, which unfortunately is at preſent but another word for ſtateſman.

The advocate informs the parliament, and the world, "that the ſhort ſpace of "time included in the Secret Correſpon-"dence was productive of events intereſt-"ing to the politics of all courts; that "the pretended traveller (that is to ſay

" Count Mirabeau) repaired thither to in-
" ſinuate himſelf into the confidence of
" the great; catch the fugitive ſecrets of
" converſation; watch the progreſs of
" courtiers, amidſt the anxieties agita-
" tions and ſudden changes of a new
" reign; take the thoughts of miniſters
" by ſurprize; divine the wiſhes of ambi-
" tion; diſcover the cabals of party; and
" penetrate the intrigues of a court which
" was ſoon to be acted upon by engines
" ſuch as had there been long unknown.
" Far from being ſuſpected, this traveller
" obtained the confidence of all. Princes
" treated him with kindneſs; miniſters
" opened him their cabinets; the great
" admitted him to their ſociety; and the
" veil of politics was rent, that he might
" ſee (*b*)." Though the learned advocate conſcientiouſly condemned the book to the flames, he did not ſeem willing to injure its ſale. He had juſt before told his auditors—" The French are a polite

(*b*) Voyez—L'Arret de la Cour de Parlement, du 10 Fev. 1789. A Paris, chez Nyon.

" people,

" people, who captivate by their acute-
" neſs of underſtanding and compaſſion of
" heart."

Still however M. Seguier declaims againſt the *illegitimate* liberty of the preſs, and laments to ſee his country at preſent " over-
" run by anonymous papers, ſeditious
" pamphlets, and ſcandalous writings.
" Services, dignities, and rank, are no
" longer reſpected. Powers, potentates,
" and crowned heads themſelves, are be-
" come objects of deriſion and ſatyr."

It is time that the jargon of ignorance and the cant of tyranny ſhould ceaſe. Miniſters and potentates are thoſe into whoſe actions the moſt unreſtrained, the moſt rigorous enquiry ought to be made. At the moment they accept offices, of ſuch infinite and awful importance, they naturally ſubject themſelves to a ſcrutiny equally important, equally awful, equally unlimited. Their lives, like great and well-regulated cities, ſhould never be ſuffered to lie in the dark. All ſhould be illumination. No obſcure corner, in which vice may lurk. No unſwept ſinuoſity, the offence

offence of which is perpetuated becauſe all are forbidden to rake it away. The Prince on his throne, like his ſtatue on its pedeſtal, is placed there to be inſpected, and have judgment pronounced upon the errors, or perfections, it may exhibit.—The ſimile is painfully, is inſufferably, beneath the ſubject; for, on the dead reſemblance, curioſity only exerciſes its faculties; but with the living man is combined good or evil of magnitude ſurpaſſing all compariſon. Where, who, is *the individual* whoſe pleaſure or whoſe peace ſhould be preferred to the welfare of millions? Is it poſſible laws ſhould exiſt that prohibit the publication of truths, or even of ſurmiſes, in which the preſent and the future fate of nations is involved?

To demonſtrate the abſurdity of ſuch laws, ſuch opinions, were a talk fit only for a child.

ON THE

PRESENT POLITICAL STATE OF EUROPE (*c*).

June 2d, 1786.

THE laſt moments of the King of Pruſſia approach; perhaps, while I write he dies; it is impoſſible he ſhould live two months: with him the key-ſtone that imparts firmneſs to the grand political fabric of Europe will drop to the ground. Appearances all forebode war.

The Emperor has, from vanity, very recently engaged *to feel* the new King of Pruſſia, as ſoon as he ſhall aſcend the throne.—*To feel* was his phraſe—"To "abrogate the crying uſurpation which

(*c*) None of the ſucceeding papers were arranged in order among the manuſcripts of the traveller; but the date of this is antecedent to all the diſpatches that were the reſult of a journey which ſeems, in part, to have been determined on in conſequence of reading the following memorial.

"has

" has wreſted Sileſia from the auguſt houſe " of Auſtria."—This is the given word at which all his writers rally.

The Emperor has little money; but he has four hundred thouſand ſoldiers, ſome officers, and the fatal power of whelming every individual of his ſubjects in the deſtructive gulph of war. All his engagements, public and private, with the Empreſs of Ruſſia, tend to realize and cement the oriental ſyſtem, which is become the ruling paſſion of Catherine II, and the ſafety, hope, and aſylum of Potemkin (*d*). The Emperor will not abandon this ſyſtem, except for the invaſion of Italy (which would be more diſaſtrous to France than even the diſmemberment of European Turkey) or for the overthrow of Germany, which would deſtroy the balance of power in Europe. Whichever plan he may chuſe, his native turbulence and gigantic projects will produce diſcord, terror, and confuſion. Theſe are his proper elements.

(*d*) Of the dangerous power of the Prince, the ſucceeding letters ſpeak more fully.

Whether

Whether he will or will not be prevented by Frederick William is a queſtion undecided. The preſervation of the Germanic liberties, now ſeriouſly menaced, will be a ſpecious pretext for preſent attack; though the King of Pruſſia ſhould hereafter wiſh to become their inveterate oppreſſor. But his perſonal ſafety is ſtill a more immediate motive; ſince the vaſt plans of the Emperor, who has Ruſſia for his accomplice, the expiring republic of Poland, the wrongs endured by Courland, our ſecret alliance, &c. &c. ſeem to endanger his political exiſtence. In fine, other conſiderations out of the queſtion, it is difficult to conceive he ſhould not be [illegible] to try his ſtrength, againſt a rival from whom he has received perſonal inſults. Frederick William II. will find more than three hundred millions in his treaſury; two hundred thouſand men, who beyond all competition form the beſt army in Europe; and the greateſt General living, who has as much influence in peace as in war, and who may be in haſte

haſte to gather laurels to bind his own brows (*e*).

Frederick William is diſſatisfied with France. He fears her tardineſs, her delays, her tergiverſation; in a word he fears all which we denominate prudence and wiſdom, which elſewhere are called ignorance or perfidy. He adores his ſiſter (*f*) and is enraged at the manner in which we treat his brother-in-law. The diſturbances in Holland will particularly influence the beginning of his reign, his heart, his mind, and his projects.

He is ſtudied, watched, and ſurrounded by the Engliſh; who will goad, inflame, and intoxicate him, that he may diſturb the peace of the continent, and that they may find opportunity of revenge. That they are preparing for this purpoſe cannot be concealed. One hundred and fifteen

(*e*) We cannot determine whether Prince Henry or the Duke of Brunſwick be here alluded to; the military merit of both was indiſputable; but of the political influence of the firſt, if he be meant, we ſhall find the author ſoon changed his opinion. T.

(*f*) The conſort of the Stadtholder. T.

ſhips

ſhips in commiſſion (g); a conſiderable increaſe of revenue; proviſions for new and immenſe loans; a ſinking fund very proper to favour theſe loans; the inexhauſtible hopes ariſing from their commutation act; credit ſo great that their three per cents, which conſtitute the principal part of their funded debt, and which amount to not leſs than five thouſand millions of livres (two hundred millions ſterling) have ſo highly increaſed in value that the price of ſtocks has, within eight months, gradually riſen from fifty-ſeven to ſeventy-four; the trial of Haſtings, which will regain them the confidence of the Eaſt; the weakneſs, the nullity of their enemies in that country, which ſhowers gold upon them and drains a conſiderable part of our wealth; the general conflagration which is ready to burſt out in Europe; the unextinguiſhable flames of Holland, whoſe foreign commerce is the only rivalſhip they have to dread, and whoſe people,

(g) The author does not ſurely underſtand the term *en commiſſion*, or he rather ſpeaks of cutters than ſhips of the line, of which he apparently means to ſpeak. T.

ſoon

ſoon or late, muſt become their allies, or fall their victims; their increaſing friendſhip with Ruſſia, where they enjoy almoſt an excluſive monopoly of naval ſtores; the rumors that are ſpread concerning the deplorable ſtate of our finances; all theſe circumſtances diſpoſe the Engliſh to war. The King perhaps is the only man in England who is not deſirous of a quarrel; and he, obſtinate as he is by nature, and more ambitious than would be ſuppoſed by thoſe who have not ſtudied him, may not fear it ſo much as his intereſts and family connexions might lead us to ſuppoſe. In any caſe he will rather voluntarily go to war than be forced upon it by the oppoſition.

Such is the preſent criſis by which the peace of Europe is threatened.—What have we to oppoſe?

We are in immediate want of more than two hundred and forty millions (ten millions ſterling); our expenditure exceeds our receipt ſixty millions (*b*) (two millions and

(*b*) The reader will remember this memorial was written in June 1786, when that abyſs *the deficit*, which indeed

and a half ſterling). if, as has been ſolemnly promiſed, the third twentieth is to be ſuppreſſed; thirty-eight if the outrage ſhould be committed on public faith to renew this dreadful tax (*i*); our royal funds ſunken in the extreme; ſtock-jobbing ruining Paris, and Paris impoveriſhing the kingdom; the people drained and diſcontented; commerce vexed and diſcouraged; diſunion at home, diſcredit abroad; our navy diſmantled and incapable of being equipped, ſhould misfortune come; our troops incompleat, and indubitably the worſt among the good; a Spaniſh alliance by which we have been continually thwarted in our operations; a ſuſpicious amity with the Dutch, which will be the readieſt fire-brand of war; another with Swiſſerland, who trembles for herſelf, and perhaps becauſe of France,

indeed good citizens ought to regard as the treaſure of the ſtate, far from being known, was ſcarcely conjectured.

(*i*) The French reads—" ſhould the outrage *not* be " committed, &c."—This is ſurely an error of the preſs, for it includes an abſurdity. T.

on which ſhe has only a precarious and timid dependance; a connection with the King of Sardinia, who has partly regarded us as ſecret enemies ſince our heſitating to guaranty his ſtates, and who at preſent can have no other ambition than that of preſerving his exiſtence; not a friend in Germany, where we have inſpired univerſal diſtruſt; the utmoſt ignorance of the deſigns of our enemies; the moſt inactive *corps diplomatique* in Europe, although the beſt paid;—in a word, ours is a body-politic in that fatal ſtate of decay which denies the ability either to make war or to maintain peace.

True it is that France, where nature does every thing in government's deſpite, a kingdom inexhauſtible in men and money, if the one be but feebly ſolicited and the other ſet in motion—France preſents thouſands of reſources. But we cannot too haſtily reverſe the fatal ſyſtem into which we are fallen; or too actively take meaſures to obtain certain information, and to try the poſſibility of a ſerious and laſting alliance with England, formed on

a commercial treaty, which, however advantageous it may appear to the Engliſh, will never make them any thing more than our carriers; an alliance offenſive and defenſive, to which Pruſſia ſhould accede, for the ſole purpoſe (formally declared) of guarantying to each power its reſpective poſſeſſions.

But, if we are determined not to depart from the beaten track, by effecting a revolution ſo ſublime, which ſhould aſcertain the peace of the world (*k*), and the only difficulty

(*k*) A curious pamphlet has lately appeared, written by Sir John Dalrymple, in which Europe is parcelled out with as much facility as a boy would break up a diſſected map; without any regard to the pretended claims of her Princes, or the real claims of her people. She is not adviſed to purſue ſuch means as, by the accompliſhment of univerſal freedom, ſhould teach her millions individually to feel and act like men; and thus, by imparting a ſurcreaſe ſo immenſe to the maſs of mind, ſhould add an energy, an expanſion almoſt miraculous, to wiſdom, conſequently to virtue; and ſhould conduct mankind to that ſtate of perfection of which they are capable, and at which, if not impeded by the convulſions of nature and the ſhock of worlds, though ſlowly, they muſt ultimately arrive.—No; in the true ſpirit of a legation ſecretary, thoſe unfortunate members

difficulty to the accompliſhment of which lies probably in the puſillanimity that fears to make the attempt, if ſo, is it not time to prepare for, though it were but to retard, war? Ought we not eſpecially to arm in the Indies; where we and our allies are in momentary danger of receiving a death blow, unwarned by the ſmalleſt threatening appearance? To ſum up all in a word, ought we not to reſtore and invigorate our affairs, foreign and domeſtic?

members of ſociety entitled Sovereigns are encouraged in the damnable hereſy of imagining this or that country is really their property; when they ſhould inceſſantly be taught that the power which the imagined policy and the wretched prejudices of men have entruſted to their caprice, inſtead of to the laws, ought to be exerted to convince thoſe who are called their ſubjects of their error, and to induce, to entreat, nay to enforce them to reſume their rights. How pitiable is it that men of the pureſt rectitude of heart, and with the moſt ardent deſire to effect public good, ſhould write, on ſubjects they are either incapable of comprehending, or with crude, premature, and deſtructive principles.

THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE COURT OF BERLIN.

LETTER I. (a)

SIR, *July 5th*, 1786.

I HAVE the honour to write to you by the firſt poſt, to inform you that the Berlin mail, for which I waited before I would enter my carriage, has brought me

(a) This letter is evidently addreſſed to a Miniſter, who had given the traveller ſome ſecret commiſſion to execute. It ſeems evident to us that this Miniſter was Mr. de Calonne; and the following letter is extremely curious, as it leads to prove that, from the beginning of the year 1786, Mr. de Calonne was determined on the aſſembly of the Notables; whom he convoked and directed, in 1787, with ſo much perilous and fatal precipitation.

no letter. It is poſſible, but not probable, that the letter of my correſpondent has been ſent too late for the poſt. It is alſo poſſible, and very likely, nay, if the Count de Vergennes has received no intelligence it is almoſt certain, that the great event either approaches or is paſt; for I hold it as infallible, that when death becomes inevitable the couriers will be ſtopped. This, Sir, deeply engages my attention, and I ſhall haſten with all expedition to Brunſwick, where I ſhall gain certain information;—there I ſhall remain ſeveral days if the King is living.

I have at preſent only to add, I ſhall think no labour time or trouble too great, if I can but ſerve you, Sir, and the cauſe of the public * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * *

I ſhall not repeat any of our converſations, but ſhall take the liberty to offer you my advice, ſolely founded on my perſonal attachment; of which you cannot doubt, ſince, independant of that amiable ſeduction which you exerciſe with power

ſo

ſo irreſiſtible, our intereſts are the ſame. The torrent of your affairs, the activity of cabals, the efforts of every kind which you ſo prodigally are obliged to make, render it impoſſible that you ſhould yourſelf claſs and arrange the grand projects which your genius has brought to maturity, and which are ready to bud and bloom. You have teſtified ſome regret that I, for the preſent, declined performing this office for you. Permit me therefore, Sir, to name a perſon, who is in every reſpect worthy of this mark of your confidence.

The Abbé de P****, to conſummate and practical abilities, joins profound circumſpection and inviolable ſecrecy. You never can ſelect a man more to be depended upon; or one who will with more fervent piety bow before the ſhrine of gratitude and friendſhip; who will be more anxiouſly active in good, leſs covetous of others fame, or one with ſuperior conviction that fame is juſtly due to him, only, who has the power to conceive and the fortitude to execute.

He poſſeſſes another advantage. His aſcendancy over P**** repreſſes the defects of the latter, which have been ſo deſcribed to you as to inſpire fears, and ſets all his great qualities and uncommon talents, which daily become more neceſſary to you, in action. There is no man who can guide and rule Mr. P**** like the Abbé de P****, who will momentarily become more valuable to you the better to effect a grand money meaſure, without which no other meaſures can be effected. You may confide that delicate buſineſs to the Abbé de P****, which, eſpecially in the preſent moment, ought not to be truſted to clerks. The noble, the [illegible]enced, the civic project of drawing inferences from the numerous falſe ſtatements that infeſt the accounts of miniſters (and which, being compared to the true ſtatements, cauſed, or rather obliged, the King to determine that deciſive meaſures ſhould give France a national credit, and conſequently a legal conſtitution) cannot be better realiſed than by the joint labours of theſe two perſons. One of them has long been devoted

devoted to you; and the other will be, whenever any ſingle act of benevolence ſhall excite his emulation. Condeſcend to believe, Sir, that you cannot act more to your own intereſt.

I was deſirous of writing thus to night, becauſe it would neither be delicate nor decent for the perſon intereſted to read what I have written; and this letter is the laſt you will receive, that muſt not paſs through the hands of a third perſon. My attachment, Sir, to you, and your fame, induces me to hope you will place ſome confidence in this counſel, if I may ſo venture to call it; and that it will not be ranked among the leaſt of the proofs of the moſt devoted reſpect with which I am, &c.

LETTER II.

Brunſwick, July 12th, 1786.

THAT the King is very ill is very certain; but he is not at the point of death. Zimmermann, the famous Hanoverian phyſician, whom he ſent for, has declared that, if he would be careful, he might ſtill live; but he is incorrigible, on the article of abſtinence. He ſtill mounts his horſe, and he even trotted fifty paces, ſome days ſince, with a man on each ſide of him; but it is nevertheleſs true that he has the dropſy; and, in reality, he has not been any better ſince my departure.

I ſhall not ſee the reigning Duke of Brunſwick before this evening: he is in the country. He has powerfully ſupported the election which the Chapters of Hildeſheim and Paderborn have lately made of a coadjutor. Mr. Furſtemberg has been elected. Vienna caballed exceedingly in favour of the Arch-Duke Maximilian. It appears that the Duke wiſhes to promote peace,

peace, ſince he endeavours, by every means, to ſtrengthen the Germanic Confederation, which certainly has that only for its end, though the means may give room for reflection. I have my reaſons for being of that opinion, which I ſhall explain on ſome other occaſion. To-day I am at the mercy of the courier.

Parties are very buſy at Berlin; eſpecially that of Prince Henry, who is eternally eager, without well knowing what he wiſhes. But all is ſilence in the King's preſence; he ſtill is King, and ſo will remain to the laſt moment *

As the immediate death of the King is not expected, I ſhall continue at Brunſwick ſome days, in order to prepare him for my return (much more premature than I had announced) and that I may more nearly ſtudy the Duke.

The coinage continues to be an object of contention, and exaggerated diſcredit. I think it would be of uſe to publiſh apo-

 logetic

logetic reaſons concerning the gold coin, confeſſing its too high rate; (for wherefore deny that which is demonſtrated?) and juſtificatory proofs, relative to the ſilver, the crowns of ſixty-nine, and thoſe ſince 1784, ſtill remaining prohibited.

You no doubt know that the Duke, Louis of Brunſwick (*b*), has quitted Aix-la-Chapelle, and is retired to Eiſenach. The troubles of that petty republic may perhaps explain his retreat; but theſe do not ſeem to me ſufficient motives for his new abode, and for this ſingle reaſon, that the Dutcheſs of Weymar is his niece.

(*b*) Not the reigning Duke of Brunſwick, juſt before mentioned, but his uncle, the late prime miniſter of the Stadtholder; or rather the late effective regent of the United Provinces. T.

LETTER III.

July 14th, 1786.

I Dined and ſupped yeſterday with the Duke. When we roſe from table, after dinner, he took me aſide to the window, where we converſed for about two hours, with much reſerve at firſt, on his part, afterward with more openneſs, and at laſt with an evident deſire to be thought ſincere.

An expreſſion of eſteem for the Count de Vergennes, and fear for his approaching retreat, gave occaſion to this private converſation. The expreſſion alluded to was immediately followed by the queſtion (which was aſked in a tone of affected indifference, and betrayed a very ſtrong degree of curioſity)—" No doubt M. de " Bre**. will be his ſucceſſor?" The Dutcheſs was of our party. I anſwered, lowering my voice, but articulating with great firmneſs—" I hope and believe not."

—It

—It was after I had ſaid this that he led me to the window, at the far end of the apartment. He preſently began to converſe, with all the energy of which his ſlowneſs and native dignity admit, of the inquietude which the Germanic body could not avoid feeling, ſhould M. de Bre**, who was at the head of the Auſtrian party, and who has long been a ſervant and friend of the cabinet of Vienna, ſucceed to the place of firſt miniſter.

I replied (ſpeaking of the Count de Vergennes with every reſpect, and of the generous and pacific intentions of the King with great confidence) that, ſhould the Count de Vergennes retire, it would probably be of his own free will; and that no one would have greater influence than himſelf in the choice of his ſucceſſor; that conſequently, whether he remained in office or went out, the firſt miniſter would not be of the Auſtrian party; and, though moſt aſſuredly the probity of the King, and the moral of his politics, would continue to render the connections between the courts of Vienna and Verſailles reſpected,

ſpected, as they would all others, yet, that the intereſt of Europe, and of France in particular, was ſo intimately united to the continuance of peace, that theſe connections, far from inciting war, could but contribute to render peace durable; that France was ſufficiently puiſſant, from innate ſtrength and from the ſtate of her affairs, honorably to own that ſhe dreaded war, which ſhe would take every care to ſhun; that I did not think ſudden war probable, eſpecially when, ſtudying the adminiſtration of the Duke of Brunſwick, I perceived that he had performed his duties, of prince and father, with ſo much aſſiduity and ſucceſs; that, however natural it might be for man to ſeek that career, in which he was indubitably the firſt, I could not believe he (the Duke) would ſacrifice to the deſire of military renown, ſo much of which he had already acquired, his favourite work, his real enjoyments, and the inheritance of his children; that all circumſtances called him to ſupreme influence over the affairs of Pruſſia, after the death of the great King, and that,

Pruſſia

Pruſſia being at this time the pivot on which continental war or peace were balanced, he (the Duke of Brunſwick) would almoſt ſingly decide which was to enſue; that he had formerly ſufficiently ſhone the hero of war, and that I was convinced he would hereafter remain the angel of peace.

He then forcibly denied ever having been fond of war; even at the time when he had been moſt fortunate. He ſhewed, independent of his principles, how ardently his family and perſonal intereſt would induce him to beware of war.—"And if "it were neceſſary," added he, "in an "affair ſo important, to conſult nothing "further than the deſpicable gratification "of ſelf-love, do I not know how much "war is the ſport of chance? I have for-"merly not been unfortunate. I might "hereafter be a better general, and yet "might not have the ſame ſucceſs. No "prudent man, eſpecially one who is ad-"vanced in life, will riſk his reputation "in ſo hazardous a purſuit, if it may be "avoided."

This

This part of his diſcourſe, which was long, animated, energetic, and evidently ſincere, was preceded by a phraſe of etiquette and remonſtrance, in which he aſſured me that he never ſhould poſſeſs, and was far from deſiring to poſſeſs, any influence in Pruſſia. To this phraſe I reverted; and, by a rapid ſketch, proving to him that I was well acquainted with Berlin, the principal actors there, and the preſent ſtate of men and things, I demonſtrated (which he moſt certainly knows better than I do) that his intereſt, the intereſt of his houſe, of Germany and of Europe, made it a duty in him to take the helm of ſtate in Pruſſia; to preſerve that kingdom from the hurricane moſt fatal to ſtates, the ſtrength of which principally depends upon opinion. I mean from petty intrigues, petty paſſions, and want of ſtability and conſiſtency of ſyſtem. Your perſonal dignity, added I, which is truly immenſe, and a thouſand times more elevated than your rank, however eminent that may be, no doubt forbids you to tender your ſervices; but it is your duty, I will not ſay not to refuſe,

refuſe, no, I repeat, it is your duty to take meaſures, and employ all your abilities, all your powers, to gain an aſcendancy over the ſucceſſor, and to ſeize the direction of affairs.

This mode of treatment greatly developed the man. He ſpoke with truth, and conſequently with a degree of confidence, of Berlin. He told me Count Hertzberg had not let him remain ignorant of our intimacy: he depicted many of the perſons who have influence, ſuch as I know them to be. I clearly ſaw that there was a coolneſs founded, on ſome unknown ſubject, between him and the Prince of Pruſſia (*c*); that he (the Duke of Brunſwick) neither loved nor eſteemed Prince Henry; and that his (the Duke's) party was as powerfully formed as it could be, in a country hitherto little in the habit of cabal, but which perhaps will preſently be initiated. I purpoſely aſſumed much faith in the warlike diſpoſitions of the cabinet of Berlin. The Duke gave good proofs

(*c*) The Heir Apparent. T.

that,

that, independant of the Heir Apparent, who, though perſonally brave, was not warlike, as well becauſe of his manners and habits as of his prodigious ſtature, that it would be madneſs to begin; that the moment of acquiſition by arms, which perhaps ſtill was neceſſary to Pruſſia, was not yet come; and that it was neceſſary to conſolidate, &c. &c. All this was very ſerious, very ſenſible, and very circumſtantial.

The oriental ſyſtem, Ruſſia, Poland, Courland, all paſſed in review.

They ſtill have their fears concerning the oriental ſyſtem; that is to ſay, concerning the part that we might take. They ſeem to believe that Ruſſia will never powerfully ſecond the Emperor, except in ſupport of the oriental ſyſtem, and whatever may contribute to its ſucceſs. Poland is to reconſtruct. We remitted ſpeaking of it, as well as of Courland. Suddenly, and by a very abrupt tranſition—(It ſeems to me he employs tranſitions to ſurpriſe the ſecrets of thoſe with whom he converſes, and on whom he

earneſtly fixes his eyes while he liſtens)—he aſked what I meant to do at Berlin.—"Compleat my knowledge of the North," anſwered I, "which I have had little op-"portunity of ſtudying, except at that "city; ſince Vienna and Peterſburgh are "to me forbidden places.—And who "knows?—We always preſume on our "own powers.—It may be hoped that, "the ſubject being ſo grand, the ſoul may "elevate the genius. I perhaps ſhall dare "to ſnatch the portrait of Cæſar, from "the Daubers who are ſo eager to be-"ſmear."—This anſwer ſeemed ſatisfactory.—I found it eaſy to interlard my diſcourſe with agreeable compliments. I told him he had rather conquered than vanquiſhed us; that we regarded the fate of Germany as reſting on his ſhoulders, &c. &c.; and that therefore the deſign of writing the moſt brilliant period of the hiſtory of the age in which I lived had placed me, even before I was acquainted with him, in the rank of one of his moſt ardent admirers. I know not whether he did or did not believe that I ſolely occupied

myſelf

myſelf with literature; but the ſuppoſition that I ſhall write hiſtory will perhaps render him more acceſſible to me, and acquire me more of his confidence; for he appears to poſſeſs the love, and even the jealouſy, of fame to the utmoſt degree.

I am preſſed by the courier becauſe, not having quitted the court all yeſterday, I could not write before this morning; and the courier departs at eleven o'clock. Writing in cypher is very tedious; therefore omit a thouſand particulars which lead me to believe—

1. That the Engliſh will not, by any means, be ſo quickly ſucceſsful in their artifices in the North, as might be feared; if the court of Berlin may at all depend on the court of Verſailles.

2. That it is time to ſpeak a little more openly to the former; and not to confound myſtery and ſecrecy, fineſſe and prudence, ambiguity and policy.

3. That the Duke of Brunſwick, whom I believe to be by much the moſt able Prince of Germany, is ſincerely deſirous of peace; and that he will inſpire the cabi-

net of Berlin with the ſame ſentiments, if but the leaſt reſtraint be laid on the Emperor; who, ſaid he to me, has ſpoken in outrageous terms, in the preſence of ſeven or eight witneſſes beſide myſelf, of the Prince of Pruſſia.

4. That the intention of the Duke is to govern Pruſſia, and to obtain great confidence and ſuperior influence in Europe; that he would dread leſt theſe would not be augmented by war, which he is convinced ought to be avoided, at Berlin; and that war is not really to be feared, except as far as France ſhall encourage the Emperor, who without us will not be any thing.

I have not time to-day to give more than a ſketch of the Duke ſuch as he appears to me, who certainly will not be thought a common man even among men of merit. His perſon beſpeaks depth and penetration, a deſire to pleaſe tempered by fortitude, nay by ſeverity. He is polite to affectation; ſpeaks with preciſion, and with a degree of elegance; but he is ſomewhat too careful to ſpeak thus, and the

proper

proper word ſometimes eſcapes him. He underſtands the art of liſtening, and of interrogating according to the very ſpirit of reply. Praiſe, gracefully embelliſhed and artfully concealed, he finds agreeable. He is prodigiouſly laborious, well-informed, and perſpicuous. However able his firſt miniſter Feronce may be, the Duke ſuperintends all affairs, and generally decides for himſelf. His correſpondence is immenſe, for which he can only be indebted to his perſonal conſideration; becauſe he cannot be ſufficiently wealthy to keep ſo many correſpondents in pay; and few great courts are ſo well informed as he is. All his affairs are in excellent order. He became the reigning Duke of Brunſwick in 1780, and found his principality loaded with debts, to the amount of forty millions of livres: his adminiſtration has been ſuch that, with a revenue of about one hundred thouſand pounds ſterling, and a ſinking fund in which he has depoſited the ſavings of the Engliſh ſubſidies, he will, in 1790, not only have perfectly liquidated the debts of the ſovereignty, but,

alſo, thoſe of the ſtate. His country is as free as it can be; and is happy and contented, except that the trading claſs regret the prodigality of his father. Not that the reigning Duke is leſs ſenſible to elegant pleaſures than another; but, ſeverely obſervant of decency, and religiouſly faithful to his duty as a Prince, he has perceived that œconomy was his only reſource. His miſtreſs, Madam Hartfeld, is the moſt reaſonable woman at court: and ſo proper is this attachment that, having a ſhort time ſince diſcovered an inclination for another woman, the Dutcheſs leagued with Madam Hartfeld to keep her at a diſtance. Truly an Alcibiades, he delights in the pleaſures and the graces; but theſe never ſubtract any thing from his labours or his duties, not even thoſe of prudence. When he is to act as a Pruſſian general, no one is ſo early, ſo active, ſo minute as himſelf. It is a mark of ſuperior character and underſtanding, in my opinion, that the labour of the day can be leſs properly ſaid to be ſufficient for him than he is for the labour of the day:

his

his firſt ambition is that of executing it well. Intoxicated by military ſucceſs, and univerſally pointed out as a great general (eſpecially ſince the campaign of 1778, during which he all the winter maintained the feeble poſt of Troppau, to which the King of Pruſſia annexed a kind of vanity, againſt every effort of the Auſtrians) he appears effectually to have quitted military glory, to betake himſelf to the cares of government. Every where made welcome, poſſeſſed of unbounded curioſity, he ſtill is capable of aſſiduouſly confining himſelf to Brunſwick, and attaching himſelf to buſineſs. He is in fine a man of an uncommon ſtamp; but too wiſe to be formidable to the wiſe. He delights much in France, with which he is exceedingly well acquainted, and appears to be very fond of whatever comes from that country. His eldest ſon, returning from Lauſanne, has paſſed through Franche-Comté, Languedoc, and Provence, and is very deſirous to return to France. I ſhall ſoon know if he is to be ſent back. In my opinion the ſon cannot be treated with too much

much reſpect there, ſo as to teſtify confidence in the father; which it ſeems to me would give the latter pleaſure, by which he would certainly be ſufficiently confirmed, and flattered, to keep this treatment in memory.

I cannot at preſent ſpeak of the ſupper, when the Duke removed me from the place of honour, oppoſite the Dutcheſs, where I ſat at dinner, to ſeat me beſide himſelf, which is always at the far end of the table. The converſation was lively, and abſolutely individual, but not political. (We had liſteners.) He queſtioned me much concerning France. I am to dine with him to-day, and to ſup with the Dutcheſs Dowager, at Antoinetten-Ruh. I could not avoid this tax on propriety, which deprives me of an opportunity of ſupping with the Duke; a favour he rarely grants, and which appeared to be much remarked here, yeſterday, where I am obſerved with anxiety. Perhaps I am ſuppoſed a place hunter!

The

The continuance of Zimmermann at Potſdam is prolonged, more than it was ſuppoſed it would have been. He writes that the dropſy is not confirmed, and he again talks of an aſthma. This is medical cant. He is the creature of the King, not of the public. Certain it is that he has gained no victory over eel pies and *polenta*; that there are no longer any wrinkles in the face; and that the parts are all inflated and œdematous.

Prince Henry however is returned to Rheinſberg, where the youthful and handſome R***, as it is ſaid, occaſions rain and fair weather.

I can warrant it as a fact that a Scotchman, who is firſt phyſician to Catharine II. of Ruſſia, being lately at Vienna, dined at the table of the Emperor, and was ſeated by his ſide. Indeed this was avowed in the Gazettes; but it was not there avowed that while this phyſician remained at Vienna, Cobenzl (the Auſtrian ambaſſador to the court of Peterſburg, but then at Vienna) having been ordered to

ſhew the phyſician a pleaſure houſe in the vicinity of the metropolis, the Emperor on horſeback *happened* to meet the doctor on the road, and continued in converſation with him, at the coach window, for the ſpace of more than two leagues.

LETTER IV.

July 16th, 1786.

TO-DAY I was three hours alone with the Duke, after riſing from dinner. The converſation was animated, frank, and almoſt confidential: it confirmed me in moſt of the opinions I gave in my laſt letter, (Number III.) but it has inſpired me with much fear, concerning the ſituation of Pruſſia, after the death of the King. The ſucceſſor ſeems to have every ſymptom of the moſt incurable weakneſs: the moſt corrupt among the perſons by whom he is ſurrounded, of whom the gloomy and viſionary Biſhopſwerder may be ranked as firſt, daily increaſe in power. There is a coolneſs ſaid to prevail between the Heir Apparent and his uncles. The coadjutorſhip of the order of St. John, beſtowed with great ſolemnity on Prince Henry, the eldeſt ſon of Prince Ferdinand, which deprives the ſucceſſor of more than fifty thou-

thouſand crowns per annum, is the moſt recent cauſe of this coolneſs. It ſhould ſeem that there have been very powerful intrigues for the eſtabliſhment of theſe two young Princes, whom both city and court regard as the children of Count S*****. The meaſures taken to effect this were ſtrengthened at the very moment when the King was ſuppoſed to be expiring, ſo as to bind the ſucceſſor, of of whom they conſequently have teſtified their ſuſpicion. To the King's brother, Prince Henry, the half at leaſt of all this appertains; nor has the Heir Apparent attempted to conceal his diſſatisfaction. Thence it reſults that all the ſubaltern parties, and their dirty cabals, become more active; ſo that the reſpect in which the court of Berlin has been held, and in which conſiſts its greateſt power, depends perhaps but too much on the life of the King; unleſs the Duke of Brunſwick ſhould ſeize the reins of government, the burthen of which he ſeriouſly appears to dread. In effect, a kingdom like this, which has no conſtituent foundation, will

be cruelly agitated, ſhould the winds of court begin to blow; and ſhould the Duke, who has formed himſelf without having ſtudied in the ſchool of adverſity, and whoſe reaſon and ſagacity it is impoſſible to ſpeak too highly of, fear to reverſe the whole ſyſtem of his mode of life. But he does not ſtart at difficulties; and he is too much intereſted, in the proſperity of Pruſſia, not to ſeek to obtain influence there.

It does not appear to me probable that the firſt ſix months, or even the firſt year, ſhould produce any change, or do more than prepare for change. The Duke has repeatedly aſſured me that all the Proteſtant powers of Germany, and a great part of the Catholic, would incontrovertibly be in the intereſt of France, whenever the latter ſhould fully convince the Germanic body of her amicable intentions: and when I aſked what pledges ſhould be given us that the high part with which the Elector of Hanover was inveſted, in the confederation of the Princes, ſhould not ſway the cabinet of Berlin to the ſide of the Engliſh, and ſhould not become an invincible impedi-

impediment to any ſincere union between Verſailles and Pruſſia, he clearly ſhewed me, ſo as not to admit of reply, that the Germanic league would never have exiſted, or at leaſt would never have aſſumed its preſent form, had it not been for the ambiguity of our conduct, relative to the Schelde, to Bavaria, and to the oriental ſyſtem. He added, that the Elector of Hanover and the King of England were two very diſtinct perſons; and that the Engliſh and the Germans were great ſtrangers to each other.

Here I ought to obſerve that, in my opinion, the Duke overacts his part, whenever he ſpeaks of depreſſing England, which I well know he loves; and that perhaps becauſe he feels his family connections may, in this reſpect, render him more liable to ſuſpicion. In a word, I cannot too often repeat that they do not appear to have confidence in us, but [illegible] confidence is very ſincerely [illegible] that the more becauſe the Emperor, unſupported by France, is not held in the leaſt dread, and that there is a reigning conviction he will

will not dare to take a ſingle ſtep, when the cabinet of Verſailles ſhall ſay—" We " will not ſuffer any infraction."

Be it however remarked, that the incoherent conduct of the Emperor, and his abrupt vagaries, often unhinge all the combinations of reaſon. The Duke has to-day learnt a fact of this kind, which may well incite meditation.

The Baron of Gemmingen, ſome time ſince, wrote a very violent pamphlet againſt the German confederacy. Dohm, an excellent Pruſſian civilian, anſwered in a ſtrong and victorious manner. The miniſtry of Vienna, in conſequence, requeſted our miniſtry to intreat the court of Berlin to ſuffer wordy hoſtilities to ceaſe: the latter conſented; but there has juſt appeared (printed indeed at Munich, but indubitably coming from Vienna) a ſatirical and bitter reply to Dohm. Verbal wars are rarely inſignificant at Vienna; where they are never begun but under the auſpices of government.

The following is another fact of ſerious import, if true. The Duke has received

advice, from Vienna, that between four and five thouſand Ruſſians have entered Poland, where the Diet threatens to be very turbulent. The Duke is deſirous we ſhould take a deciſive part, concerning and againſt all new arrangements, tending to the further diſſolution or diſmemberment of Poland. I have not knowledge ſufficient of this country to enter into any circumſtantial detail; but I ſpoke to him on the ſubject of Courland, explaining my ideas, relative to the late proceedings of Ruſſia in this country, ſuch as they will be found in my memorial: and I introduced my diſcourſe as if ariſing out of the converſation. He was ardently attentive to what I ſaid, and promiſed to write according to my ſenſe of the danger to Count Hertzberg. I well comprehend that the circumſtances of the moment are nothing leſs than favourable; and the aſſ[illegible] which was warmly given by a moſt excellent politician emboldens me to entreat that my memorial may be taken into conſideration, though it ſhould only be practicable in future, and that ſome inſtructions may be

ſent

ſent me, on the manner in which I may ſound the Duke of Courland on this head, whom I ſhall meet at Berlin, and the principal perſons of Courland, with whom I may eaſily correſpond; my trade of traveller being known, and my deſire to collect facts and to deduce conſequences giving great opportunities to enquire and ſpeak concerning all ſubjects.

MEMORIAL (d)

Sent to the court of France, concerning the declaration made by Ruſſia to Courland, and publiſhed in the Leyden Gazettes, from the 20th of May to the 3d of June, 1786.

COURLAND has lately been officially menaced with the indignation of the Sovereign of all the Ruſſias; on the ſuppoſition that the report, relative to the abdication of the Duke of Courland in favour of the Prince of Wurtemberg, a general in the Pruſſian ſervice, ſhould be true.

The reigning Duke, Erneſt-John, a ferocious man, ſo much abhorred in his own country as not to be able to remain there, although he ſhould not dread any violence from the miniſtry of Peterſburg, is known to be the ſon of the famous Biron, who was reinſtated Duke of Courland,

(d) This is apparently the memorial which is mentioned in the preceding letter.

land, in 1760, by the influence or rather through the fear of Ruſſia, which power, with the aid of forty thouſand men, expelled Prince Charles of Saxony, the uncle of the Elector and the legitimate Duke, to reſtore the former favourite of Elizabeth (*e*), whom a court faction had lately recalled from Siberia.

It is alſo known that this Erneſt-John has more than once felt the whole weight of the reſentment of Catherine II.; that he has been near twenty years baniſhed into Siberia; that he has no influence whatever in Courland; and that his abdication is univerſally wiſhed.

But it is not known, or rather it is kept ſecret, that he was enjoined, by a Ukaſe (or Edict) ſix years ago, to reſign his

(*e*) This is a miſtake. Biron was the favourite of the Empreſs Anne Ivanowna; was baniſhed to Siberia by Anne of Mecklenburg, the Princeſs Regent of Ruſſia; was ſoon recalled from Schluſſelburg and ſent to Yaroſlaf by the Empreſs Elizabeth; was reſtored to freedom by Peter III.; and, after the aſſaſſination of the latter, to his dutchy by Catherine II.; not to confer a favour on Biron, but to wreſt the dutchy from Poland, and render it dependent on herſelf. T.

dutchy to Prince Potemkin; and that by the advice of the chancellor Taube, and of the chamberlain Howen, he averted the ſtorm by remitting to Prince Potemkin (whoſe affairs ever were and are in diſorder) two hundred thouſand ducats. Raſon, the miniſterial ſecretary of the Duke, was entruſted to carry him this ſum.

Whether it be that Potemkin, while waiting for the execution of his grand projects, which perhaps relate to the Oriental ſyſtem, or to circumſtances that are yet immature, wiſhes to acquire this acceſſion of power; whether it be that he is in want of money; or more eſpecially whether it be that the Duke of Courland, ſince his ſituation has been ſo precarious, is known in conſequence of his avarice to have become one of the richeſt Princes in Europe, and that, rendered effeminate by adverſity, old age, and the daily importunities of his laſt wife, who has acquired ſome influence over him, he is endeavouring to place himſelf beyond the reach of ill-fortune; be it which of theſe cauſes it may, a ſimilar criſis is again returned.

The

The cabinet of Peterſburgh is ignorant of none of theſe things. It doubtleſs fears that the court of Berlin is ſpeculating, concerning the province of Courland; hoping, by the aid of a new Duke, to have it entirely at its diſpoſal. The conditions which gave Poland a right of protection over Courland having ceaſed, when power became law, and at the moment the oppreſſed republic found it impoſſible to fulfil thoſe conditions, it is not abſurd to apprehend that Pruſſia will ſurreptiouſly take the place of Poland, and thus to its own profit confirm the right by the deed.

Courland is in reality far from a contemptible country. Its climate, being in the 57th degree of latitude, though ſufficiently is not inſupportably cold. Its extent in length is eighty leagues, and in breadth fifty. Its ſoil is fertile, and its natural products are very neceſſary for all the commercial and maritime powers. Two principal and navigable rivers divide it, from eaſt to weſt, the Aa and the Windau: ſeveral brooks and canals in-

terſect it in every direction. It has two ports, Windau and Liebau on the Baltic. In its preſent impotent and indolent ſtate, its commerce active and paſſive does not employ leſs than from ſix to ſeven hundred veſſels, of three, four, and as far as eight hundred tons burthen. It contains ſeven or eight ſmall towns, and its population is eſtimated at more than a million and a half of inhabitants. The landholders may be ſuppoſed not to be in a ſtate of wretchedneſs, ſince the revenues of the reigning Duke, whoſe influence in the republic is ſo ſmall, annually amount to two hundred thouſand pounds ſterling.—Such is the outline of the ſituation of Courland.

It would be of little uſe to prove, in this place, that the republic, being a free ſtate, the Prince of which is purely elective, ſo that though he may abdicate he cannot transfer his privileges. Ruſſia cannot legally interfere in the affairs of Courland, which ought to be as independant as are its rights. This word rights is totally ſtripped of meaning, when oppoſed to the word power. Ruſſia has long been

in the habit of vexing Courland, internally and externally; of dictating the choice of its governors; of laying its ſuffrages under reſtraint; and of extorting or forcibly ſeizing on its money, its produce, and its men. The Monarchs of Peterſburg have always made it a principle to familiarize the courts of Europe to the ſuppoſition that Courland has no political exiſtence; except ſuch as Ruſſia ſhall pleaſe to beſtow.—All this is well known.

The points I ſhould wiſh briefly here to examine are——

1. Whether it is not evidently our intereſt to introduce a new order of affairs: and——

2. Whether we have not the means ſo to do.

Courland, kept back and oppreſſed by every kind of exterior and interior tyranny, poſſeſſes no one ſpecies of manufacture. It abounds in naval ſtores; for which reaſon there is an affinity, reſulting from circumſtances, between Courland and France, which latter holds the firſt rank among

induſtrious nations, or an affinity between their mutual products, the direct barter of which would give birth to the moſt advantageous kind of trade.

In reality, there exiſts at preſent a ſpecies of barter between Courland and France; but in ſo indirect a manner that it is carried on at ſecond or third hand, by the intervention of the Engliſh, the Dutch, the Swedes, the Danes, the Pruſſians, the Hans-Towns, &c.

This intervention abſorbs and deſtroys all the benefit which a trade ſo advantageous would be of to France, and which certainly ought abundantly to procure us, and at a moderate price, a price unknown in our dock-yards and markets, ſhip-timber, maſts, ſpokes, fellies, fineering wood, &c. &c.: grain, ſhip-beef, ſalt-fiſh, vegetables, &c. &c. The natural returns for theſe would be the produce of our induſtry, from the coarſeſt to the fineſt articles (for nothing is manufactured in Courland) which the Courlanders, (whoſe conſumption is great, and who are very deſirous of articles of luxury, and even of finery) would

would then obtain from us at a moderate price, ſtill infinitely lucrative to our traders.

The advantage of this direct trade would not be confined merely to money; for, beſide the influence which ſuch intimate connections with Courland would give us in the Baltic and the North, where we ſhould become the mediators between Pruſſia, Ruſſia, and Poland, which laſt ſtate muſt neceſſarily ſoon undergo ſome new change, France, by a commercial treaty with Courland, would aſcertain two ports on the Baltic, which would at leaſt remain neuter and almoſt excluſive to herſelf. Theſe would be uſeful to us, both in war and peace, as depoſitary places for ſtores, and moſt of the materials which are requiſite for the royal and mercantile marine; and would highly compenſate the diſadvantage which continually encreaſes, and which is preparing for us in the North, relative to our marine, in conſequence of the ſtrict connections between England and Ruſſia.

To the attentive obſerver, England preſents every ſymptom which can menace the poſſeſſions of the Dutch in the Eaſt, and which can forebode the deſire of revenge. Ruſſia can at any time rob France of a great part of the naval ſupplies of war, in the European ſeas.

This order of affairs cannot too ſoon be reverſed.

Let it be attentively obſerved that there is no queſtion here of a new treaty, but the revival of an ancient one: for the Cardinal de Richelieu made a treaty with Courland, in 1643, which was regiſtered by the parliament of Paris, in 1647; ſo that, ſhould we at preſent treat with Courland, we can deciſively affirm, and demonſtate, we are committing no innovation.

This ſeems to me to be a very important remark, which ought not a little to influence the reſolution that may be taken; and the form given to that reſolution, when once it is taken.

The ſtates of Courland deſire this political affinity between the two countries. The Chamberlain Howen, of whom I

have ſpoken, is a man of the greateſt influence in the republic; and, of all the Courlanders, the moſt an Anti-Ruſſian; becauſe that, while an envoy from Courland to the court of Warſaw, he was carried off, by order of the Empreſs, and baniſhed into Siberia. His nephew was indirectly, but formally, charged to queſtion the government of France, on this ſubject. I poſitively know he has ſpoken to the Count de Vergennes, and that the only anſwer he received from the miniſter was—

1. That, he being miniſter for foreign affairs, this was a ſubject that did not appertain to his department.

2. That it was requiſite that the Duke of Courland and the ſtates, conjointly and officially, ſhould make a propoſition to the King, concerning a treaty of commerce.

To this I reply—

1. That, moſt certainly, the miniſter for foreign affairs ought to conſult with the miniſter of finance, on whatever relates to commercial treaties; but that this

this does not therefore appear to me a ſufficient reaſon to reject either the project or the propoſal.

2. That it would be abſurd to ſuppoſe that Courland, bowed as it is under the iron rod of preſent circumſtances, would expoſe itſelf, by taking any open ſtep, without firſt being certain its propoſitions ſhould be favourably received, and that the country ſhould be protected againſt that power which, poſſeſſed of ſtrength and in the habit of taking its will for law, ſhould make every effort to counteract, and prevent, whatever might tend to impart ſolidity to the conſtitution of Courland, and to render its political independance reſpectable.

I ſee no hope that any power, except Pruſſia, ſhould intereſt itſelf in the affairs of this province. And this is the ſecond point which it is my intention to prove, in this memorial.

1. Becauſe the ſituation of the Pruſſian ſtates is ſuch that, the ſtability and proſperity of Courland ought no leſs to influence

fluence the King of Pruſſia than if this country was one of his own provinces.

2. Becauſe he cannot prudently covet Courland, which Ruſſia would never leave him in peaceable poſſeſſion of, and which would but increaſe the length of his provinces, already too much extended, without rendering his power more real, or more compact.

This latter point is ſelf demonſtrative; and, as to the advantages which Pruſſia might derive from the future ſtability of Courland, and from the increaſe of its energy and induſtry, theſe are evident from a mere view of the map. Between the ſtates of Brandenburg and Ruſſia there is only the diſmemberment of Poland, which at preſent forms part of Pruſſian Lithuania and of Courland; of which the King of Pruſſia, politically ſpeaking, would become the uſeful proprietor that very day on which he ſhould become its guardian and protector. Ruſſia therefore neceſſarily and indubitably is formidable to none of the powers of Europe, Pruſſia excepted,

ed, on which kingdom ſhe can bring evil, and which can do her no injury.

On the other part, it is known that there is only a very narrow ſlip of Poliſh Lithuania between the ſtates of Pruſſia and Courland, which barely extends from five to ſix leagues. Here Pruſſia might eaſily make legal and amical acquiſitions, ſufficient to open a very advantageous tranſport trade on the Memel, and the canals that might be cut between that river and the rivers of Courland, deſcending to the ports of the Baltic, of which I have ſpoken.

Either I am much deceived or the miniſtry of Berlin might eaſily be made to comprehend that, inſtead of forming projects of ambition on this republic, its real intereſt would be to declare in ſome manner Pruſſia to be the repreſentative of Poland, in her engagements towards Courland, as ſtipulated by the *pacta conventa* and the *pacta ſubjectionis*, which have been actually and neceſſarily deſtroyed. Pruſſia might find a hundred reaſons of public right to allege,

allege, independent of her dignity and ſafety. This propoſition, and that of acceding to our treaty of commerce with Courland, would therefore contain nothing imprudent; it would perhaps be a good means of depriving the Houſe of Brandenburgh of all fears, relative to our northern politics. Nor does it ſeem to me impoſſible but that the King of Pruſſia would, on this condition, ſupport the declaration we might make, to the court of Peterſburgh, that it was our determination to protect Courland; and not to ſuffer a free country, allied to France by ancient treaties, to be humbled, over which we would not permit any direct and legiſlative influence to be exerted, by any court.

Such a declaration, ſoftened by every diplomatic formality, which is ſo eaſily practiſed, would at this time be ſufficient, in my opinion, eſpecially if made in concert with the court of Berlin, to repel the projects of uſurpation conceived by Ruſſia over Courland.

Be theſe things as they may, this ſmall country, too little known, together with Poland and the Germanic body, claim the ſerious attention of the King of France; who, if my opinion be right, has no other general intereſt, on the continent, than that of maintaining peace, and the reciprocal ſafety of ſtates.

LETTER V.

July 19th, 1786.

YESTERDAY morning, before my departure, the Duke granted me an audience for the ſpace of about three hours; or rather perſonally indicated a conference, under the pretence of remitting letters to Berlin, and which indeed he committed to my care. We again ſpoke of general affairs, and of the particular ſituation of Pruſſia; of the ſuſpicions which he pretends it is impoſſible to avoid entertaining, concerning our intentions and our ſyſtem; (how ſhould I anſwer him when ſuch is the diſorder of our finances that it is impoſſible we ſhould have any ſyſtem?) of the dread that daily increaſes, which the Emperor neceſſarily inſpires, who does good awkwardly, but who does enough to acquire great power, the baſis of which is magnificent, and highly diſproportionate to that of any other monarchy,

narchy, France excepted; of the impoſſibility of finding any counterpoiſe to this power, except in the prudence of the cabinet of Verſailles; of the little hope that the new regulations of Pruſſia ſhould be wiſe; of the various directions which the various factions that were fermenting at Berlin might take; of the military vigor and the ambitious fumes which intoxicate the Duke of Weymar, who aſpires to enter into the ſervice of Pruſſia, and to embroil parties; of the neceſſity which there was that the cabinet of Verſailles ſhould ſend a man of merit to Berlin, there to inſpire awe and give advice, keep watch over the factious and the turbulent, &c. &c. &c.

At length, queſtioning me with an air of fearing, what he was going to ſay was an abſurdity, he aſked whether I ſhould think the project of an alliance between France, England and Pruſſia, an impracticable chimera; the end of which ſolemnly avowed ſhould be to guarantee, throughout Europe, to each Prince his reſpective poſſeſſions; a meaſure in itſelf noble, and worthy

worthy of the two firſt powers, which ſhould command all others to remain at peace; founded on the evident and combined intereſt of the two rivals, and the greateſt obſtacle to which would be that no one would dare to put it in execution.

The idea, on which I have for theſe ſeven years been ruminating, is too ſublime not to be ſeductive. It would infallibly immortalize the Sovereign by whom it ſhould be realized, and the miniſter by whom it ſhould be promoted. It would change the face of Europe, and totally to our advantage: for, once again, commercial treaties, however advantageous to England, would never make the Engliſh any thing more than our carriers, and our moſt uſeful factors.

The Duke has permitted me to correſpond with him; he even deſired me ſo to do, and I find I have obtained almoſt that very place in his opinion which I myſelf could have wiſhed.

July 21ſt, 1786.

Firſt Poſtſcript. I am arrived, and perhaps I ſhall learn but little to-day. The dropſy is in the ſtomach, nay in the lungs. He was informed of it on Thurſday. He heard it with great magnanimity, ſay ſome; others affirm he treated the phyſician, who was too ſincere, very ill. He might drag on life, if he would take advice, Doctor Baylies ſays, another year; but I ſuſpect he will never give up eel-pies. Count Hertzberg has been at Sans-Souci this week paſt; he had never before been ſent for. Two days previous to that on which the King made him this kind of honourable reparation, if however it be any thing elſe than the neceſſity of giving breath to thoſe who are obliged to converſe with him, and of enlivening his converſation, the Heir Apparent dined with the Count at his country-ſeat, and paſſed beſt part of the evening with him and the Prince of Deſſau. This has bewildered the parties that are hotly animated againſt this eſtimable miniſter; in and for whom, according to my opinion, our embaſſy has always

ways teſtified too little confidence and reſpect.

Second Poſtſcript. I have intelligence, from what I believe to be a very certain and profound ſource, wholly independent of the cabinet of Berlin, that the Emperor has made preparations which greatly menace thoſe parts of Moldavia and Wallachia that would be convenient to him to poſſeſs; that he is immediately expected to repair to thoſe frontiers in perſon; and that ſuch motions can no otherwiſe be explained than by reacting the conqueſt of the Crimea, in thoſe countries. This information, combined with the ultimatum which Ruſſia has delivered in to the Porte, ſeems to me to be of ſovereign importance. I do not know the preciſe intentions of the court of France; but, if the indefinite aggrandizement of the Emperor and particularly the execution of the Oriental ſyſtem are as formidable to us as I ſuppoſe them to be, I entreat deliberations may be held whether it befits the dignity of the King to ſuffer the tragedy of Po-

land to recommence, the intereſt of the ſtate to loſe the Levant trade, or prudent policy to temporize, when the match is putting to the touch-hole. I cannot for my own part doubt but that our inactivity, in ſuch a caſe, muſt be gratuitous; becauſe that the Emperor would moſt certainly not brave us; and fatal alſo; ſince we are preciſely the only power who have at once the intereſt and the ſtrength to impede ſuch attempts. England will trouble herſelf little concerning them; and without us Pruſſia is nothing.

LETTER VI.

July 21ſt, 1786.

* * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * *

An odd incident has happened to me. I am juſt returned from the French ambaſſador's, who ſent me word he could not have the honour of receiving my viſit, becauſe he was buſy. To feel the whole import of this act, it is neceſſary to know that there has lately appeared an article, in the Hamburg Gazette, affirming in expreſs terms I had received orders to quit France. You will further recollect that, in general, the ambaſſador of France is eagerly deſirous of receiving the viſits of French travellers. Such is the preſent combination of circumſtances that this, which would only, on any other occaſion, be an affair of rather ſerious impoliteneſs, is at this moment a very embarraſſing affectation. I believe I have no need to

tell you I am far ſuperior to punctilio; but this is not mere form. The natural preponderance of France is ſuch that, the reſpect in which a native of that country is held cannot be wholly independent of the reception he ſhall meet from the ambaſſador. What then muſt be thought when he ſhall be envied, ſuſpected, and watched; and when pretences are ſought to render his character equivocal? And what muſt be his ſituation when, far from ſeeking to quarrel with the ambaſſador, it is his duty and his wiſh, on all occaſions, to preſerve appearances, and to protect him from becoming inſtead of making him ridiculous?

You will have no difficulty in comprehending that it is an intricate affair, and that I muſt well reflect on the part I have to take. At preſent I muſt diſſemble, and expoſe myſelf to a new refuſal to-morrow; but it will be impoſſible to ſuffer this new refuſal to remain unnoticed. I write you word of this in order that, in any caſe, and rather too ſoon than too late, you ſhould inform M. d'E*** it is not the intention

tention of government that I ſhould be treated in a diſreſpectful manner, and ſtill leſs as a proſcribed perſon. He is ſo much of a timid trembler, that he may have been impoſed upon by the Hamburg paragraph. I do not think him ſufficiently cunning to have written it himſelf. He certainly appeared ridiculouſly diſturbed at my return, and entirely departed from his ſilent circumſpection, that he might diſcover, by queſtioning thoſe whom he ſuppoſed intimate with me, what were my intentions. Some of the numerous perſons who do not love him, eſpecially among the *corps diplomatique*, have amuſed themſelves with inventing tales relative to my views, ſimilar to thoſe of the thouſand and one nights. His brain is in a ſtate of fermentation upon the ſubject; and the more ſo as he is acting out of character. I may in conſequence of this be very ill ſituated here; to prevent this you will take proper meaſures.—I ſhall tell you more before I ſeal this letter: he is not a perſon who will oppoſe the leaſt miniſterial inſinuation.

LETTER VII.

July 23d, 1786.

THERE is nobody here, conſequently I ſhall for ſome days lead an inactive life. There is no court, except that of Prince Ferdinand, which is always inſignificant; he is at preſent on the recovery (*f*). Prince Frederick of Brunſwick knows nothing. The Engliſh embaſſy careſs and ſuſpect me. Count Hertzberg ſtill remains at Sans-Souci; I muſt therefore ſatisfy myſelf with the ſterility of the moment. I imagine I have diſcovered that the real occaſion of the threatning declaration of Ruſſia, reſpecting Courland, was a ſecret propoſal of marriage between the Counteſs of Wurtemberg, the natural daughter of the Duke, and a Pruſſian; and the increaſing intimacy of the Duke with the Heir Apparent, who has found,

(*f*) Prince Ferdinand had juſt then eſcaped from a dangerous fit of ſickneſs.

in

in the purſe of this ſavage Scythian, that pecuniary aid with which he ought long ſince to have been ſupplied by France. The Duke of Courland departed, ſoon after the menace of Peterſburgh appeared, with his wife, who is ſaid to be pregnant, to drink the Pyrmont waters. According to all appearances, inſtead of remaining at Berlin on his return, he will go to Mittau. He ſtill continues to make acquiſitions, in the Pruſſian dominions: he has lately bought the county of Sagan, in Sileſia; and the King, who was not a little vexed to ſee the Prince of Lobkowitz ſpend the revenues of this fine eſtate at Vienna, treats the Duke of Courland with great favour. Beſide remitting the manor fees, he conſented to alienate or at leaſt to entail the fief on female deſcendents, which before was reverſible to the crown on the want of male heirs; ſo that the Duke, who has no ſon, found that, by his careleſſneſs, or a very ſtrange kind of ignorance, he had riſked ſix hundred thouſand German crowns on a chance the moſt hazardous.

It is indubitable that Prince Potemkin is, or appears to be, more in favour than ever. It has been found neceſſary to approve his diſobedience. There are reports that he has ſought a reconciliation with the Grand Duke, which he has accompliſhed.

The new miniſter of Peterſburgh (the ſon of Field Marſhal Romanzow) is not ſucceſsful here: intelligent people however affirm he poſſeſſes underſtanding, and information. I know he has ſtrong prejudices againſt me, which I ſhall endeavour to remove, and to gain his intimacy; for he is of ſuch a nature that much may be derived from his acquaintance. But you muſt feel I ſtand in need of ſome inſtructions, or at leaſt of a ſeries of queſtions, which ſhall ſerve me as a compaſs, and by which I may obtain the cuſtomary intelligence. General politics have for ſome years been very incoherent, for want of poſſeſſing ſome fixed ſyſtem.—Which of the two alliances, that of the Houſe of Auſtria, or that between the two imperial courts, Auſtria and Ruſſia, ought be regarded

garded as ſtable, ſacred, and ſubordinate to the other? Is France reſolved to quit her natural train, I mean to ſay her continental ſyſtem, for the maritime? If ſo, whether wiſely or not, this will at leaſt explain our extreme cautiouſneſs, in what relates to the projects of the court of Vienna.

The man who wants this knowledge can do little more than wander at a venture; he may, with more or leſs intelligence write a gazette, but, not having a ſufficient baſis to build on, cannot be a negociator. I entreat it may not be ſuppoſed I have the preſumption to interrogate: I only mean to explain, in very few words, ſuch of the reaſons which, excluſive of my own want of capacity and of the few means my ſituation affords me, infinitely circumſcribe that utility which I wiſh and labour to be of to my country.

I hope I ſhall not be ſuſpected of ſuppoſing any importance annexed to thoſe extracts from the German newſpapers which I ſhall in future ſend by every courier. It is purely an object of curioſity,

ſity, but which I thought might be agreeable, in a country where, I believe, not a ſingle German gazette is received; and into which ſo many ambaſſadors ſend no other diſpatches than thoſe obtained on the authority of theſe gazettes. I ſhall only ſpeak in my extracts of the news of the north.

Firſt Poſtſcript. Advice yeſterday arrived commanding Lord Dalrymple to depart, and bear the order of the garter to the Landgrave of Heſſe Caſſel.

Second Poſtſcript. I have received a very friendly letter from Sans-Souci. The King ſeems to hope he ſhall ſtill live long, he appears however to be much more occupied concerning himſelf and his pine-apples than by foreign affairs. Aſtoniſhment is teſtified (This is a ſurpriſing affair!) though in a very obliging manner, that the ſon of the Count de Vergennes ſhould paſs through Hamburg, Dreſden, Vienna, &c. without any hope of ſeeing him at Berlin. I have anſwered I was very grate-

ful, in behalf of my nation, for the importance annexed to the topographical peregrination of the ſon of our miniſter for foreign affairs; and that I imagined nothing could be more flattering to his father; but that, for my own part, I was wholly uninformed on the ſubject; though I was perſuaded that, if the court of Berlin was reſerved as the laſt place to be viſited, it would only be from a love of the *Creſcendo*. I ſaid the ſame to Count Goertz, by whom I was warmly queſtioned.

LETTER VIII.

Berlin, July 26th, 1786.

THE fine weather ſupports the life of the King, but he is ill. On Wedneſday he was for ſome minutes wheeled about in his chair, by which he was much incommoded and ſuffered greatly during and after the exerciſe. His pains increaſed on Thurſday, and yeſterday he was no better. I perſiſt in my opinion that the period of his exiſtence will be towards the month of September.

The Heir Apparent does not quit Potſdam, where he keeps on the watch. Still the ſame reſpectul paſſion for Mademoiſelle Voſs (*g*). During a ſhort journey that ſhe lately made with her brother, a confidential valet-de-chambre followed her carriage at a diſtance, and if the beauty, who in my opinion is very ordinary, teſtified the leaſt deſire (to eat white bread, for example)

(*g*) At preſent the Counteſs of Ingenheim.

ample) before ſhe had proceeded half a league further ſhe found every thing ſhe wiſhed. It appears indubitable that ſhe has not yet yielded. No great uſe can be made either of her uncle or her brothers. French women arrive daily; but I doubt much whether there will be any great advantage derived from them, except to innkeepers and milliners.

The Duke of Courland has lent the Heir Apparent money to pay his debts at Berlin; they are ſuppoſed to be all diſcharged, except thoſe of his Princeſs, which they are not very anxious to liquidate, from the fear of giving her bad habits.

I have ſpoken at large with Struenſee: he ſuppoſes the project of the bank to be a grand and ſuperb operation, which cannot but ſucceed. He aſks timely information, and promiſes to place and cauſe to be placed in it a conſiderable ſum; but the ſecret muſt only be known to him, and the ſubject treated only between ourſelves.

LETTER LA.

July 31ſt, 1786.

* * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * *

I ſuppoſe in reality that, in this commencement of correſpondence, my letters are waited for, in order to write to me; however if my letter of the twenty-third of July, Number 5, has been well decyphered and conſidered, it cannot be diſowned that I ſtand in need of inſtructions. Politics are at a criſis. I repeat politics are at a criſis. It is impoſſible they ſhould

continue

continue as they are; whether it be from endeavours to accelerate or efforts to retard. Every thing denotes the Oriental ſyſtem to increaſe in vigor. I have no doubt but that ſoon or late, it will be deſtructive of that of the weſt; and the danger is immediate, is inſtantaneous. If Turkey in Europe, ſpeaking in political and commercial language, be one of our colonies, if we are not reſolved to leave it to its fate, is it not time to pay it ſome attention, and becauſe that it is ſo, the general ſyſtem of Europe out of the queſtion? Were the King of Pruſſia ten years younger, he would well know how to reſtore the equilibrium; for he would take as much from Poland as others might take elſewhere: but he dies and has no ſucceſſor. For my own part, it is eaſy to conceive I ſhall conſume my time in barren efforts; and, after taking much more trouble, ſhall be much leſs uſeful than if I knew what track to follow, and where to gain information.

The King is in daily danger of death, though he may live ſome months. I per-

ſiſt in my autumnal prognoſtics. Prince Henry having ſent for me to Rheinſberg by a very formal and friendly letter, it would appear affectation in me not to go; and I ſhall ſet off on Wedneſday, after the departure of the courier. I ſhall not remain there longer than a week, where I ſhall have good opportunities of intelligence, concerning the ſtate of the King, and of gaining information on various matters.

Poſtſcript. The King is ſenſibly worſe: he has had a fever theſe two days; this may kill him, or prolong his life. Nature has continually done ſo much, for this extraordinary man, that nothing more is wanting, to reſtore him, than a hemorrhoidal eruption. The muſcular powers are very great.

The Engliſh embaſſy has received advice, from Vienna, that the Emperor is in Tranſylvania; and that the world is ignorant of what he is doing, what he intends, or even to what place he is gone.

All the boats on the Danube are taken into his ſervice * * * * *

* * * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * *

The maritime company wiſhed to monopolize the ſale of ſnuff and tobacco in Sweden, offering to pay half a million annually to the King; but the Swediſh ſtates have totally refuſed to forbid the cultivation of tobacco in the kingdom, and this was the condition, *ſine quâ non*. The actions of this Monarch decline greatly, on all occaſions; another diet like the preſent, and monarchical power would once more fall in Sweden. It appears to be undoubted that the rumour of his having turned Catholic, on his journey to Rome, has alienated the whole nation. But are we to impute nothing to the intrigues of Ruſſia, in the preſent fermentation?

Struenſee repeats that, if the bank be eſtabliſhed, he and his friends are ready; that is to ſay the moſt monied men in the

kingdom; and probably, under a new reign, the government itſelf. This man ought to be cheriſhed: it would be of importance were I often empowered to give him good information, reſpecting the ſtate of the place. Meditate on this. His reſources are in himſelf, and will probably ſurvive his adminiſtration. He has gained immenſely, by ſpeculating in the Engliſh funds: he ought to be weaned of this, to which he is ſelf-inclined, for he feels and owns that chances in the Engliſh funds are exhauſted, for the remainder of his life.

LETTER X.

Auguſt 2d, 1786.

Written before my departure for Rheinſberg.

* * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * *

The King is evidently better, at leaſt with reſpect to pain, when he does not move; he has even left off the uſe of the *taraxicum*, or dandelion, the only thing Zimmermann preſcribed, who conſequently is in deſpair. He ſimply takes a tincture of rhubarb, mixed with diarrhœtics which give him copious evacuations. His appetite is very good, which he indulges without reſtraint. The moſt unhealthy diſhes are his greateſt favourites. If indigeſtion be the conſequence, as it frequently is, he takes a double aperitive doſe.

Freſe, his phyſician of Potſdam, ſtill continues in a kind of diſgrace, for having dared to whiſper the word dropſy, on the queſtion being aſked him, and an appeal made to his conſcience, what was the name and character of the diſeaſe. The King is exceedingly chilly, and is continually envelopped in furs, and covered by feather-beds. He has not entered his bed theſe ſix weeks, but is removed from one arm-chair to another, in which he takes tolerably long ſleeps, turned on his right ſide. Inflation augments; the ſcrotum is exceedingly tumid. He perceives this, but will not perſuade himſelf, or appear to believe, that it is any thing more than the inflation of convaleſcence, and the reſult of great feebleneſs.

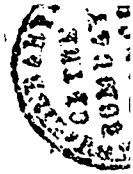
This information is minutely exact, and very recent. There is no doubt of his unwillingneſs to die. The people beſt informed think that, as ſoon as he believes himſelf really dropſical and at the point of death, he will ſubmit to be tapped, and to the moſt violent remedies, rather than peaceably reſign himſelf to ſleep with his fathers.

fathers. He even deſired, ſome time ſince, inciſions might be made in his hams and thighs; but the phyſician feared to riſk them. With reſpect to his underſtanding, it is ſtill ſound; and he even continues his labours.

LETTER XI.

Auguſt 8th, 1786.

THE King is dangerouſly ill; ſome affirm he has not many hours to live; but this probably partakes of exaggeration. On the fourth, the eryſipelas with bliſters on the legs made their appearance: this prognoſticates burſting, and ſoon after gangrene. At preſent there is ſuffocation, and a moſt infectious ſmell. The ſmalleſt fever——and the curtain muſt drop.



LETTER XII.

Auguſt 12*th*, 1786.

THE King is apparently much better. The evacuation, which was the conſequence of the apertures in his legs, has cauſed the ſwelling to abate, and given eaſe; but has been followed by a dangerous exceſs of appetite. He cannot continue in this ſtate. You may expect to receive a grand packet, at my return from Rheinſberg.

LETTER XIII.

Auguſt 15th, 1786.

I AM juſt returned from Rheinſberg, where I have lived in the utmoſt familiarity with Prince Henry. I have numerous modes of communication, which will develop themſelves as time and opportunity ſhall ſerve: at preſent I ſhall only ſtate conſequences.

Prince Henry is in the utmoſt incertitude, concerning what he ſhall or ſhall not be, under the new reign. He greatly dreads, and more than he wiſhes to appear to dread, though his fears are very viſible, the influence of Count Hertzberg, who is ſtill detained at Sans-Souci; but, as I think, only for the ſake of his converſation; at leaſt as far as reſpects the old King. This Count Hertzberg has openly eſpouſed the Engliſh ſyſtem: but, though the flatteries of Ewart (*b*) and his ſecret

(*b*) Then ſecretary to the embaſſy, and now the Engliſh ambaſſador at Berlin.

arts

arts have much profited, by the long contempt in which the French embaſſy have held this miniſter, I believe his principal reaſon for attaching himſelf to England is becauſe that Prince Henry, his implacable enemy, is the avowed and fanatical protector of the French ſyſtem; and becauſe the Count imagines he cannot otherwiſe make himſelf indiſpenſably neceſſary to the oppoſite party; for which reaſon he cloaths himſelf in the uniform of the Stadtholder.

In conſequence of this, and perſuaded as I am that Prince Henry has not ſufficient influence over the ſucceſſor (who is weary of avuncular deſpotiſm) to diſplace Hertzberg, who will continually batter his enemy in breach, by boaſting, by meanneſſes, by a faithful portrait of the Prince's creatures, and by the jealouſy with which he will inſpire the new King againſt Prince Henry, who if he be any thing will be maſter; convinced alſo that he (Hertzberg) is uſeful to France, which is influenced by the uncle becauſe he holds the Engliſh ſyſtem in abhorrence; I have exerted every effort to induce Prince Henry (who

(who wants nothing but diſſimulation) to reconcile himſelf with Count Hertzberg, and thus put his nephew out of fear. This he might with the greater ſecurity do becauſe that Hertzberg, relative to him, could be nothing more than a firſt clerk; who, if he ſhould act uprightly, would make as good a clerk as another; and who, ſhould he endeavour to deceive, might be the more eaſily cruſhed, after having been admitted a colleague.

I have had much difficulty in perſuading him; for Baron Knyphauſen, the brother-in-law of Hertzberg and his irreconcilable enemy, becauſe that their intereſts claſh, is poſſeſſed of the entire political confidence of the Prince; of which he is worthy, for he is a very able man, and perhaps the only able man in Pruſſia: but, as he is in danger of a confirmed palſy, as his mind and body both decay, and as the Prince himſelf perceives they do, I was able to effect my purpoſe, by dwelling on all theſe circumſtances, while I heaped exaggerated praiſe on Baron Knyphauſen, and expreſſed infinite regret for his ſituation;

tion; ſo that I have prevailed on the Prince, and have perſonally received a commiſſion to negotiate an accommodation, between him and Hertzberg; for which purpoſe I ſhall go the day after to-morrow to Potſdam.

What may I augur from all this? Weakneſs only and incoherency. It appears indubitable that petty cabals, the fine arts, the blues, the ſubalterns, the wardrobe, and particularly the myſtics, will engroſs the new King. I have anecdotes innumerable on this ſubject, by which I ſhall endeavour to profit, and which I ſhall communicate in good time. Has he any ſyſtem? I believe not. Any underſtanding? Of that I doubt. Any character? I cannot tell: my preſent opinion is that no concluſions, for or againſt, ought yet to be drawn.

To memorials exceedingly well drawn up, by Prince Henry and Baron Knyphauſen, all tending to demonſtrate that, ſhould Pruſſia attach itſelf to the Engliſh ſyſtem, fifteen years hence Frederick William will be the Marquis of Brandenburg,

burg, he gives replies which are ſlow, vague, laconic, and hieroglyphic. He wrote the other day, for example (I ſaw the letter) *The Prince of the Aſturias is all Engliſh.* Baron Boden however, who is his confidential correſpondent, and who has lately remained ſhut up with him a whole week in his garden at Potſdam, has proteſted that the diſpoſitions of the ſucceſſor are wholly French, and that he had charged him to endeavour to convert Hertzberg. Remark this. Remark ſtill further that Boden is a man of low cunning, who may wiſh to deceive Prince Henry, in whoſe ſervice he formerly was, with whom he quarreled, and to whom he is now reconciled; heaven knows by what means. Obſerve once again, that the Prince of Salm-Kirburg has alſo been (nearly about the ſame time) a week concealed at Potſdam. What inconſiſtency!

It is the advice of Prince Henry that Boden, who is returned to Paris, ſhould be tampered with. He alſo wiſhes (for your great men do not diſdain little means) that a lady ſhould be ſent hither, of a fair com-

complexion, rather fat, and with ſome muſical talents, who ſhould pretend to come from Italy, or any where but France; who ſhall have had no public amour; who ſhould appear rather diſpoſed to grant favours than to diſplay her poverty, &c. &c. Some elegant trifles would not be amiſs; but take care not to forget the man is avaricious.—The French letters, at leaſt thoſe which I ſhall ſhew, ought to ſpeak well of him; and to report that the King has ſpoken favourably of him; particularly that he has ſaid—"This Prince like "me will be a worthy man." Repetition might be made of the ſucceſs of Prince Henry in France; but in this I would adviſe moderation; for I believe Prince Henry has ſpoken too much himſelf on that ſubject; he has pretended to prophecy concerning the new reign, and predictions are diſagreeable. Let me add it is affirmed that, could the new King be gained, he would become the moſt faithful and the moſt fervent of allies: to this his uncle Henry pledges his honour and his head: and indeed the Prince of Pruſſia has

has never forfeited his word. It is added, as you may well believe, that it is neither poſſible nor proper to require more; for in fine we are ſuſpected, and with good reaſon, &c. &c.

You will imagine France has not been thus treated without any pleadings in the behalf of Pruſſia; and the advocates have pretended to prove (the map on the table) alike by military and political details, that the alliance of Pruſſia would be much more effectual to France, againſt England, than that of Auſtria. If it be requeſted, I will draw up a memorial, according to the grounds that have been given me. Nor is it at all required that we ſhould quarrel with Vienna: nothing more is aſked than a treaty of confraternity, agreeable to the guarantee of the treaty of Weſtphalia; a treaty well known at all courts, and with this only ſecret article that, ſhould there be any infringement of the peace, we then ſhould go further; and if at the preſent a treaty ſhould be refuſed, reciprocal letters between the two Kings, ſealed and ſo left till ſome event ſhould happen,

would be deemed ſatisfactory. In ſhort, a pledge is demanded againſt the Auſtrian ſyſtem; and the written word of honour of the King of France will be accepted. No ſubſidies are or will in any caſe be aſked; perhaps even Pruſſia will pay ſubſidies, to Brunſwick and Heſſe. Great complaints are made of France, for having permitted and even favoured the German confederation. "For muſt not Germany "ſoon or late aſſume ſome conſiſtent "form? Muſt not Pruſſia acquire a fron-"tier? And what other means are there "than thoſe of ſecularization, which by "this confederacy are interdicted? How "otherwiſe arrange the affairs of Saxony "than by Weſtphalia and Liege?" This latter phraſe appeared to me very remarkable.

* * * * * * I do not nor cannot at preſent mean to ſend any thing more than the great outlines. Prince Henry is French, and ſo will live and die. Will he have any influence? I know not. He is too pompous; and the Duke of Brunſwick, of a very different complexion, is

the man neceſſary to the King and the country, though he is not loved by the former. However, I am ſupplied with the ſecret means of correſpondence, inquiry, and ſucceſs; and it could not be more made a common cauſe between us. I am promiſed that my ſervices to my country ſhall be amply repaid, on the day an alliance is concluded with France, &c. &c.

I forgot a curious fact. The Heir Apparent wrote to Boden, before his journey to Berlin, to enquire what the people of Paris thought of him. "That you will "be feeble, indolent, and governed,"—was the ſubſtance of Boden's reply. The Prince as he read the letter ſtamped with his foot, and exclaimed, "F***** (*i*) I have ſuf- "fered by myſelf and I will reign by my- "ſelf."

Poſtſcript. By the natural diſcharge of the water from the legs, which may be calculated at a pint per diem, the ſwelling of the ſcrotum has diſappeared: the patient imagines the general inflation is diminiſh-

(*i*) An obſcene dirty French exclamation. T. ed.

ed. It is probable he is feveriſh every night; but of this he endeavours to remain ignorant. His appetite is ſo extraordinary that he generally eats of ten or twelve of the higheſt diſhes. His ſupper and breakfaſt conſiſt of ſmoaked tongues, bread, butter, and a large quantity of pepper. If he feel his ſtomach oppreſſed by its load, which is uſually the caſe, he has recourſe an hour or two after dinner to a doſe of *anima rhei*. He wiſhes to have ſix or ſeven motions in the twenty-four hours, excluſive of clyſters. From all this you may gather the reſult, which is that we are inconteſtibly at the laſt ſcene, more or leſs protracted.

LETTER XIV.

Auguſt 17th, 1786.

ALL is over!—Frederick William reigns —and one of the grandeſt characters that ever occupied the throne has burſt one of the fineſt molds that nature ever organized!

The vanity of friendſhip was highly intereſted that you ſhould be the firſt informed of this event; and my meaſures were all moſt carefully taken. On Wedneſday, at eight in the morning, I knew he was as ill as poſſible; that the preceding day the hour of appointment for the day following was noon, inſtead of eleven o'clock, as was before cuſtomary; that he had not ſpoken to his ſecretaries till mid-day, who had been waiting from five in the morning; that however the diſpatches had been clear and preciſe; and that he ſtill had eaten exceſſively, and particularly a lobſter. I further knew that the prodigious foulneſs of the ſick cham-

ber, and the damp cloaths of the patient, which he wore without changing, appeared to have brought on a ſpecies of putrid fever; that the ſlumbers of this Wedneſday approached lethargy; that every ſymptom foreboded an apoplectic dropſy, a diſſolution of the brain; and that, in fine, the ſcene muſt cloſe in a few hours.

At one o'clock I took an airing on horſeback, on the road to Potſdam, impelled by I know not what foreboding, and alſo to obſerve the meanderings of the river, which is on the right; when a groom riding full ſpeed came for the phyſician Zelle, who received orders to make all haſte, and who inſtantly departed. I ſoon was informed that the groom had killed a horſe.

I was thrown into ſome perplexity. That the city gates would be ſhut was certain; it was even poſſible that the drawbridges of the iſland of Potſdam would be raiſed, the moment death ſhould take place; and ſhould this happen my incertainty would continue as long as it ſhould pleaſe the new King. On the firſt ſuppo-

ſition—how ſend off a courier? There were no means of ſcaling the ramparts or the paliſadoes, without being expoſed to a fray, for there are ſentinels at every forty paces behind the paliſadoes, and at every fifty behind the wall. What was to be done? I had not received, could not receive any orders; I could only uſe my own reſources. And ought I to expoſe myſelf to ridicule, by ſending intelligence already known, or concerning an event ſo well foreſeen? Was the loſs or gain of a week worth the expence of a courier? Had I been ambaſſador, the certain ſymptoms of mortality would have determined me to have ſent off an expreſs before death. For what addition was the word death? How was I to act in my preſent ſituation? It certainly was moſt important to ſerve, and not merely to appear to have ſerved.—I haſtened to the French ambaſſador.—He was not at home: he dined at Charlottenburg.—No means of joining him at Berlin.—I dreſſed myſelf, hurried to Schoenhauſen, and arrived at the palace of the Queen as ſoon as the ambaſſador. He had

had not been informed of particulars, and did not imagine the King was ſo ill; not a miniſter believed it; the Queen had no ſuſpicion of it; ſhe only ſpoke to me of my dreſs, of Rheinſberg, and of the happineſs ſhe had there enjoyed, when Princeſs Royal. Lord Dalrymple, with whom I am too intimate to admit of diſſembling what my opinion was, aſſured me I was deceived. That may be, replied I: but I whiſpered to our ambaſſador that I had my intelligence from the ſick couch, and that he ought to believe ſtock-jobbers had as good information as the diplomatic body (*k*). I know not whether he believed me; but, like me, he would not ſit down to play, and left the company ſoon enough to ſend news of the approach of death.

I ſtill had great reaſon to be diffident of the activity of our embaſſy.—How did I act? I ſent a man, on whom I could depend, with a ſtrong and ſwift horſe to a farm, four miles from Berlin, from the

(*k*) It will here be perceived this was intended to give the French ambaſſador to underſtand that he had no competitor.

maſter of which I had ſome days before received two pair of pigeons, an experiment on the flight of which had been made; ſo that, unleſs the bridges of the iſle of Potſdam were raiſed, I acted with certainty; and, that I might not have a ſingle chance againſt me, for I thought the news tardy in arriving, I ſent M. de N** by the daily ſtage, with orders to wait at the bridges of the iſland. He was acquainted with the ſtation of my other man; the raiſing of the bridges would ſpeak plainly enough; he had money ſufficient to puſh forward; there was no human power apparently that could counteract me, for my gentry had not a ſingle Pruſſian poſt to paſs, and were to proceed to Saxony, taking care not to go through any fortified place; and they had their route ready traced.

M. de N** was departing at half paſt ſix in the morning, with the ſtage, when General Goertz, aid-du-camp to the late King, arriving full ſpeed, called aloud— "In the King's name lower the portcullis,"—and M. de N** was obliged to

turn

turn back! Five minutes after I was on horſeback; my horſes had paſſed the night ſaddled; and, that I might omit nothing, I haſtened to the French ambaſſador. He was aſleep. I wrote to him immediately that I knew a certain mode of conveyance, if he had any thing to ſend. He anſwered, and I keep his note as a curious proof if, which however to me appears impoſſible, the Count de Vergennes keeps no courier (*l*)—" The Count d'Eſt** has the " honour to return thanks to M***** but " cannot profit by his obliging offer."

I then reflected either he had ſent off a courier, who only could convey the news of the King's extreme danger, conſequently there muſt be ſomething to add, or he had received orders not to ſend any; otherwiſe his apathy was wholly inconceivable. I moreover knew that the Saxon envoy had ſent off his chaſſeur on the eve, ſo that he was twenty hours and forty leagues in advance with me; it therefore was wholly improbable that M. de V*** at Dreſden

(*l*) The Count de Vergennes firſt read the news in the Leyden Gazette.

ſhould

ſhould not hear of the King's danger. The ſame might be conjectured of the aid-du-camp Wittinkoff, who bore the news to the Dutcheſs Dowager of Brunſwick, and would certainly ſpread it; ſo that nothing was left for me till abſolute death ſhould happen. After conſidering, I did not find we were rich enough to throw a hundred guineas away; I therefore renounced all my fine projects, which had coſt me ſome thought, ſome trouble, and ſome guineas; and I let fly my pigeons to my man with the word RETURN.

Have I done well, or ill? Of this I am ignorant; but I had no expreſs orders; and ſometimes works of ſupererogation gain but little applauſe. I have thought it my duty to ſend you this account; firſt becauſe it may be of ſervice; (obſerve that ſeveral prizes have thus been gained) and ſecondly to prove that I wanted neither zeal nor activity, but effrontery.

The new King remained all Thurſday at Sans-Souci, in the apartment of General Moellendorf. His firſt act of ſovereignty was to beſtow the order of the Black Eagle on

on Count Hertzberg. At five in the morning, his Majeſty was buſy with the ſecretaries of the late King. This morning he was on horſeback in the ſtreets of Berlin, accompanied by his eldeſt ſon. Thurſday preſented a ſpectacle worthy of obſervation * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * * *
* * * there were many wet eyes, even among foreign ambaſſadors; for they were all preſent, the French excepted, when the troops took the oath of allegiance.

The ceremony is awful, and would be more ſo if the oath, which the ſoldiers repeat word by word, were not ſo long. Yet this vaſt military paraphernalia, that multitude of ſoldiers, who all the morning ſwarmed in the ſtreets, and the precipitate adminiſtring of the legionary oath, ſeem but to me too excluſively to proclaim

claim the military power: ſeem but to ſay——I AM MORE ESPECIALLY THE KING OF THE SOLDIERS. I COMMIT MYSELF TO MY ARMY, BECAUSE I AM NOT CERTAIN OF POSSESSING A KINGDOM.——I am perſuaded theſe military forms will be mitigated under the new reign,

LETTER XV.

Auguſt 18th, 1786.

PRINCE Henry received information of the deceaſe ſomewhat late; not till yeſterday, the ſeventeenth, at midnight. But this perhaps was occaſioned by their deſire to ſend him one of his favourite officers, who was a very bad horſeman. The letter of the King was a page and a half in length, written by his own hand, and inviting the Prince to come, who arrived today at three in the afternoon. As ſoon as it was dark, his aid-du-camp came for me; and what follows is the ſubſtance of the Prince's narrative.

He has had an interview of an hour and a half with the King, but is no further advanced in the knowledge of what he ſhall hereafter be. The King was devoid of oſtentation in his behaviour to his family; and was very much moved with the Prince, ſays the latter, but no way communicative. The uncle only attempted

ed to ſpeak of foreign politics. His requeſt in behalf of his favourite, Tauenſien, captain and aid-du-camp to his Royal Highneſs, was immediately granted.

" Reſolved on the French ſyſtem, but " deſirous of ſeeing"—' Why ?'—" Dig- " nity, prudence, the alarming diſcontents " of Holland"—' Are you brother or ' King?—As brother intereſt yourſelf—' As King do not interfere, you will but ' have the greater influence.'—" Your fa- " ther whoſe name you cannot pronounce " without weeping was as much French " as I am; this I will demonſtrate by his " letters."—' Oh I have ſeen proofs of ' that'—replied the King ' in thoſe of the ' Queen of Sweden.'

" Vienna"—' Advances it is ſuppoſed ' will be made; they will be accepted; the ' war of peace will actually be concluded.'

" The Engliſh ſyſtem?"—' God preſerve me from it (*m*)'—" Ruſſia?"—' It ' has ſcarcely been thought on.'

(*m*) It is Hertzberg who debates warmly for Holland; and beneath this maſk the tip of the Engliſh ear appears.

The

The whole day paſſed in well-managed artifice. The King was on horſeback with his eldeſt ſon; he addreſſed his generals with careſſes of every kind—" If you " ſerve leſs faithfully than formerly, I, by " being obliged to puniſh, ſhall be the " perſon puniſhed." He ſpoke a little more ſeriouſly to the miniſters, with whom notwithſtanding he dined.—Severely to the ſecretaries—" I well know you have been " guilty of indiſcretions: I would adviſe " you to change your behaviour."

Hertzberg hitherto preſerves all his conſequence. The King has not once pronounced his name to Prince Henry, nor the Prince to the King. His Majeſty however tenderly embraced Count Finkenſtein, a true French knight errant, and the only perſon, after Knyphauſen, in whom Prince Henry confides; that is to ſay willingly—" I thank you," ſaid the King, " for the eminent ſervices you have " been ſo indefatigable in rendering my " uncle; and I requeſt you will act in the " ſame manner for my intereſt——." It is to be noted that Count Finkenſtein is the

the implacable enemy of Hertzberg, but the uncle of the dearly beloved Mademoiſelle Voſs.

The will is to be opened to-morrow, in preſence of thoſe intereſted. The King will not attempt to alter a ſingle line, one article excepted, the neceſſity of eraſing which he will ſubmit to his uncles. The old Monarch has been generous. He has bequeathed Prince Henry two hundred thouſand crowns, and a handſome ring, excluſive of what will revert to him by the family agreement. The reſt are likewiſe well treated, but not ſo magnificently.

The funeral ceremony afforded Prince Henry a proper excuſe for remaining; it is to be performed at Rotſdam. The King will depart thence to receive homage in Pruſſia and Sileſia; this is an old cuſtom of the country. Prince Henry will come to an explanation previous to his journey; but he is determined to wait as long as poſſible, that the King may begin the ſubject himſelf.

Speaking of me, his Majeſty ſaid—— "I ſuſpect he is ordered to obſerve me; "his

" his love (*n*) for the Emperor probably " will not expoſe him to the temptation " of ſpeaking ill of me, when there is no- " thing ill to be ſpoken."

Prince Henry fears that, the mode of life excepted, the method and eſpecially the ceremonies of government will be continued. He has charged me to mention that Count d'Eſt** is much too cold, too diſtant, too entirely an ambaſſador, for the new King. He entreats our miniſtry not to be tedious in bargaining concerning the pledges of confidence.

It is ſaid, and I forgot to aſk Prince Henry, who perhaps does not know whether it be or be not true, that the King has ſent for the Duke of Brunſwick. The miniſter Schulemburg is in danger. Prince Henry, by whom he has ſo long been hated and decried, is reſolved to give him ſupport. Schulemburg only returned this morning. He has compoſed, or rather made Struenſee compoſe, an apologetic memorial, adroit and ſophiſtical, in

(*n*) This is ironical. T.

which he has imputed to the late King that order of affairs which he propoſes to remedy. He declaims againſt monopolies; he, who is himſelf at the head of all the monopolies: but he endeavours to prove they cannot be ſuddenly reformed, eſpecially that of the maritime company.

LETTER XVI.

Auguſt 22d, 1786.

PRINCE Henry is ſingularly well ſatisfied with the new King, who the day before yeſterday (Sunday) ſpent the greateſt part of the afternoon with his uncle. The latter went to him in the morning to know the watch word. He pretends his nephew indicates an entire confidence in him; but I fear he interprets compliments into pledges of truſt. He affirms the downfal of Hertzberg approaches; this I do not believe. I and my nephew, ſaid the Prince, have been very explicit; but I doubt the nephew has deceived the uncle. The conciliating temper of the King, and his good-nature, which induce him to receive all with kindneſs, may likewiſe lead to error; without intending deception; and theſe rather prove he poſſeſſes ſenſibility than ſtrength of mind.

Prince Henry affirms the King is entirely French. He requeſts that no attention may be paid to the ſending of Colonel or Major Geyſau to London, with acceſſion compliments; theſe he affirms relate only to the family. The King has beſide been deceived: he was told that the court of St. James had ſent compliments at the death of King George, which is not true. This, it is added, is an artifice of Count Hertzberg. Prince Henry did not arrive ſoon enough to prevent the thing being done; were it to do again, it ſhould be otherwiſe. (Remark, it is the Prince himſelf who ſpeaks.) No one has been ſent either to Vienna or to Peterſburg. (Not to Vienna, to the chief of the empire, who is almoſt as near a relation as the King of England.—And as to Peterſburgh, Romanzow has made ſuch bitter complaints that Count Finckenſtein, moderate as he is, demanded whether he had received orders from his court to ſpeak in that ſtile.) But it is ſingular enough that envoys have been ſent every where elſe; and particularly Count Charles Podewils (brother

(brother of him who is at Vienna) is gone to bear the news to Sweden. This is departing from the old ſyſtem; to which it is ſaid the King means, in other reſpects, to adhere; for the King of Sweden was held in averſion by the late King; nor is he leſs hated by Prince Henry. Count Stein, a kind of domeſtic favourite, is gone to Saxony, Weymar, Deux-Ponts, &c.

Prince Henry wiſhes the miniſter for foreign affairs ſhould write, and immediately, that the court of France hopes the new King will confirm the friendſhip his predeceſſor began; and ſhould give it to be underſtood that all the Pruſſian miniſters are not ſuppoſed to mean as well, toward France, as the King himſelf—(I am not at all of this opinion; for this would be to diſtinguiſh Hertzberg, and to render the war againſt our cabinet more inveterate. If the downfall of this miniſter be neceſſary, it can only be effected by taxing him with governing the King) —and that the reciprocity of good will, and good offices, may and ought to produce a more intimate connexion. He

wiſhes M. de Calonne might write ſoon to him (Prince Henry) a friendly and oſtenſible letter, but which ought to be ſent by ſafe hands; that it ſhould be recommended to Count d'Eſt** to ſmooth his brow; and he is particularly deſirous a mode of ſomewhat calming the affairs of Holland ſhould be found, and that this act ſhould be much praiſed, and inſiſted on.

The Duke of Brunſwick has been ſent for, and is to arrive on Thurſday. It is ſaid he brings another will, which was depoſited in his hands. The firſt was not read before the family, but only in preſence of the two uncles and the two miniſters. The legatees have all received their bequeſts. The date of this will is 1769. It is in a pompous ſtile, and is written with labour and declamation. The King has been exceeding attentive to ſpecify that his legacies are made from the ſavings of his privy purſe.

The following is a ſketch of his donations. The Queen has an annual augmentation to her income of ten thouſand crowns.—Prince Henry has the groſs ſum

of two hundred thouſand crowns, a large green diamond, a luſtre of rock cryſtal eſtimated at fifteen thouſand crowns, a ſet of eight coach-horſes, two led horſes richly capariſoned, and fifty *anteaux*, or ſmall caſks of Hungarian wine.—Prince Ferdinand the groſs ſum of fifty thouſand crowns, and ſome Hungarian wine.—Princeſs Ferdinand ten thouſand crowns annually (The reaſon of this was that, in 1769, ſhe was the only Princeſs of her houſe who had any children) and a box.—Princeſs Henry ſix thouſand crowns annually.—The Dutcheſs Dowager of Brunſwick ten thouſand crowns annually.—The Princeſs Amelia ten thouſand crowns annually, and all the perſonal plate of the late King.—The Princeſs of Wurtemberg the groſs ſum of twenty thouſand crowns.—The Duke of Wurtemberg a ring.—The Landgrave of Heſſe the groſs ſum of ten thouſand crowns.—Prince Frederick of Brunſwick the ſame. The reigning Duke of Brunſwick the ſame, with eight horſes (among others, the laſt that Frederick mounted) and a diamond

ring, eſtimated at twenty-two thouſand crowns, &c. &c. &c.

The King has confirmed all this with a very good grace. The only article that he will not agree to was a ſtrange whim of the late King, relative to the interment of his body; he wiſhed to be buried beſide his dogs. Such is the laſt mark of contempt which he thought proper to caſt upon mankind (*o*). I know not whether the will that is coming will be equally reſpected

(*o*) The tongue of ſcandal *very publicly*, that is to ſay in Pruſſia, gives a far different reaſon; but it is one ſo revolting, ſo atrocious, that not only charity but probability leads us to ſuſpect the truth of *ſuch* an accuſation. Still his love for his dogs while living, his manner of treating them, and his laſt requeſt to be buried by their ſide, are very ſtrange, or, in a man like him, very whimſical facts. One of theſe favourites, a greyhound bitch, was taken at the battle of Sorr, when the baggage was plundered by Trenck and Nadaſti. Regardleſs of inferior loſſes, the King was in the act of writing to Nadaſti, to requeſt his bitch might be reſtored, when the Auſtrian general, knowing his love for the animal which was itſelf greatly attached to him, had ſent it back; the bitch unperceived by the Monarch leaped upon the table while he was writing, and as uſual

ſpected with that already opened, even though they ſhould not be contradictory.

As to the ſituation of the court, I believe the truth to be that Prince Henry exaggerates his aſcendancy; and that he is in abſolute ignorance of the King's intentions. They prattle much together, but there is no ſingle point on which they have yet come to any ſtipulation. True it is that five days are ſcarcely yet elapſed. But wherefore preſume?——The Prince ſupports the miniſter Schulemburg; and I know that Schulemburg found the King dry and cold. He had one choice for the French embaſſy; and I know the King has another, which he has not even concealed from the Prince. The Monarch hears all, but is in nothing explicit. Biſhopſwerder himſelf perhaps does not know what he is to be, and, if he be prudent, will not be in too great haſte.

uſual began to careſs him, at which he was ſo affected that he ſhed tears. The day before he had cut off many thouſands of men, and charged his *dear children* to give no Saxon quarter. T.

I have

I have twice ſeen Count Hertzberg, and found him ſtill the ſame, a ſmall portion of diſſimulation excepted. He very poſitively denied being Engliſh. He does not ſeem to me to think he has the leaſt need of Prince Henry, whom he has not been to viſit (which is very marked, or rather indecent, behaviour) ſince his promotion to the order of the Black Eagle. I wiſhed to inſinuate to him that it would be eaſy to conſult the uncle by the aid of the nephew; this he declined, but gave me an apologetic memorial for Prince Henry, relative to his perſonal diſcuſſions with Baron Knyphauſen. Either Prince Henry or Hertzberg, or both, are much deceived. Hertzberg certainly ſups almoſt every night with the King; and the opinion of ſome well-informed people is that this miniſter, and General Moellendorf, will be appointed to educate the Prince of Pruſſia.

The Marquis of Luchefini is continued in his place, by the preſent King; but hitherto he has only been deſired to write the poem for the funeral. The ſecretary of Prince Henry, it is ſaid, is to compoſe the

the muſic; and this is one of the things which turn the uncle's brain.

I have ſent the King my grand memorial (*p*); he has only acknowledged having received it, adding that I might remain perſuaded whatever ſhould come from me would give him pleaſure; and that, of all the obliging things that were ſaid to him, none flattered him more highly than mine. * * * * *

* * * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * *

P. S. The miniſters took the oath of allegiance yeſterday, about three o'clock; hence, no probable changes for ſome time to come. Count Arnim Boytzemburg, ſent for by the King, arrived with all haſte, and paſſed the evening with his Majeſty. I believe him proper for nothing but a place about court; it may however have

(*p*) The memorial found at the end of the ſecond volume. T.

relation

relation to the embaſſy to France, but more probably to the place of grand marſhal, or that of miniſter of the Landſchafft, a kind of preſident of the provinces, who greatly influences the aſſeſſments of the taxes, and other internal arrangements.

LETTER XVII.

Auguſt 26th, 1786.

I FEAR my prophecies will be accompliſhed. Prince Henry appears to me to have gained nothing but bows from his nephew. One article of the will of the King's grand-father diſpoſed of the ſucceſſion of certain bailliages, ſo as to bequeath an acceſſion of income, of about forty or fifty thouſand crowns, to Prince Henry; including an augmentation of the revenue of Prince Ferdinand. Circumſtances not being exactly the ſame now as ſuppoſed by the teſtator, the miniſters (that is to ſay Hertzberg) have pretended that this bequeſt no longer was legal; and the King eluding to grant the legacy, has made a propoſal to his uncle to have the ſuit determined, either in Germany, France, or Italy. The Prince has written an ingenious and noble letter to him, but in which

which he indicates the enemy. The King has redoubled his outward careſſes for his uncle, and has ſubmitted to three judges, who have been nominated by the Prince. I hence conclude that the uncle will gain the ſuit of the bailliages, but never that of the regency.

Hertzberg however has commiſſioned me to make ſome advances from himſelf to the Prince, and this I think is a ſign that he is not in perfect ſecurity. I never could prevail on the Prince to comply; ſometimes inflated, ſometimes agitated, he neither could command his countenance nor his firſt emotions. He is deceitful, yet knows not how to diſſemble; endowed with ideas, wit, and ever a portion of underſtanding, but has not a ſingle opinion of his own.—Petty means, petty councils, petty paſſions, petty proſpects; all is diminutive in the ſoul of that man. While he makes gigantic pretenſions, he has a mind without method; is as haughty as an upſtart, and as vain as a man who had no claim to reſpect; he can neither lead nor be led. He is one of the too frequent

examples

examples that inſignificance of character may ſtifle the greateſt qualities.

The thing the new King fears the moſt is being thought to be governed; and in this reſpect Prince Henry, of all men, is the leaſt adapted to the Monarch; who I believe would conſent not to reign, provided he might only be ſuppoſed to reign.

Remarkable change!—The general directory is reſtored to the footing on which it was under Frederick William I. (q). This is a wiſe act. The reſult of the madneſs of innovation, under Frederick II. was that, of all the Kings in Europe, he was the moſt deceived. The mania of expediting the whole affairs of a kingdom in one hour and a half was the cauſe that the miniſters were each of them abſolute in their departments. At preſent, all muſt be determined in a committee; each will have occaſion of the conſent and ſanction of all the reſt. In a word, it is a kind of council. This no doubt will have its in-

(q) The predeceſſor of the late King. T.

conveni-

conveniencies; but how are inconveniencies to be avoided?

The edict for ſuppreſſing the Lotto is ſigned, as I am aſſured. I ſhall at leaſt have done this much good to the country (*r*).—But the King has permitted the laſt drawing, which is wrong; there ought to have been none under his reign. Perhaps it is only popular report.

The Duke of Brunſwick arrived this evening. Mr. Ardenberg-Reventlau, a man of merit and his favourite miniſter—(though Mr. Feronce is the principal)—preceded him, and was here at a quarter after four. The Duke was admitted to ſee his Majeſty, who riſes at four o'clock; at half after ſix he was on the parade. The King received him neither with diſtance nor ardor. Perhaps nothing more is meant, by this journey, than politeneſs. Neceſſity only could make ſuch a man prime miniſter, who will not trouble himſelf with fruitleſs efforts, but who will be very tenacious in his graſp. I ſhall not

(*r*) See the before-mentioned memorial. T.

converſe

converſe with him till to-morrow. The will he brings will probably be burnt; it is ſaid to be of a much earlier date than the other, and as far back as 1755.

The Landgrave of Heſſe Caſſel it is affirmed is coming; alſo the Duke of Weymar, the Prince of Deux-Ponts, and even the Duke of York. Of the latter I doubt.

Hertzberg pretends that the King, by becoming the pledge of the Stadtholder, ought to make us eaſy concerning Holland, but he has not told us who ſhall make the pledge reſpected.

Prince Henry wiſhes advice ſhould be ſent that Count Hertzberg, who has not the good word of all the world, appears to have gained the entire confidence of the King, and even to act the maſter. This laſt imputation is probably the moſt effectual method to procure the downfal of any man, under the preſent reign.

There are many ſmall court favours granted, but no conſiderable place beſtowed. I have attempted to reconcile Hertzberg and Knyphauſen, which I was in a

train to accompliſh, by demonſtrating to them that their coalition would erect a throne which could not be ſhaken. Knyphauſen refuſed, becauſe, alleged he, Hertzberg is ſo deceitful it can never be known whether the reconciliation is or is not ſincere; and it is better, ſaid the Baron, to be the open enemy than the equivocal friend, of a man whoſe credit is ſuperior to our own.

I am inclined to think Hertzberg muſt be diſplaced, if we wiſh the Pruſſians ſhould become French. Three months are neceſſary to draw any concluſions, that ſhould be at all reaſonable. I again repeat, if you have any grand political views, relative to this country and Germany, put an end to the democratical quarrels of Holland; which are only the diſputes of cunning, profitable to thoſe who have their fortunes to make, but not to thoſe whoſe fortunes are made.

LETTER XVIII.

Auguſt 29th, 1786.

TO prophecy here daily becomes more difficult; time only can afford any rational prognoſtics. The King apparently intends to renounce all his old habits; this is a proud undertaking. He has made three viſits to Schoenhauſen (*s*), nor has he caſt one look on Mademoiſelle Voſs: no ſemblance of an Orgia; not one woman's boſom touched ſince he has ſate on the throne. One of his confidants propoſed a viſit to Charlottenburg—"No," replied he; "all my "former allurements are there."—He retires before ten in the evening, and riſes at four; he works exceſſively, and certainly with ſome difficulty. Should he perſevere, he will afford a ſingular example of habits of thirty years being vanquiſhed. This will be an indubitable proof of a grand character, and ſhew how

(*s*) The Queen's palace. T.

we have all been miſtaken. But even, the ſuppoſition granted, which is ſo far from probable, how deficient are his underſtanding and his means. I ſay how deficient, ſince even his moſt extatic panegyriſts begin by giving up his underſtanding. The laſt day that he exerciſed the troops, he was ridiculouſly ſlow, heavy, and monotonous. The men were four times ranged in columns, and concluded with parading. This continued three hours; and in the preſence of a general ſuch as is the Duke of Brunſwick.—Every body was diſſatisfied.—Yeſterday, the firſt court day, he was ill; he forgot ſome of the foreign miniſters, and uttered nothing but a few common place phraſes, haſty, embarraſſed, and ill choſen; this ſcarcely continued five minutes. He immediately left us to go to church; for he does not miſs church; and religious zeal, homilies, and pulpit flatteries already begin to be every where heard and ſeen.

Prince Henry has gained his ſuit, concerning the bailliages, as I had foreſeen: in other reſpects, he has not advanced a

ſtep; conſequently, has gone backward. He dines every day with the King, and does wrong; he affects to whiſper with him, and does wrong; he ſpeaks to him of public affairs inceſſantly, and does wrong. The King goes alone to viſit the Duke of Brunſwick; and alſo goes in company with Hertzberg, or meets him at the Duke's. The latter pretends to interfere only with the army; the ſole thing which, according to him, he underſtands. I have never yet ſeen him in private, but he has appointed me an audience on Wedneſday morning.

The Engliſh faction continues very active, and this proves there are difficulties to encounter. In reality, it is an alliance ſo unnatural, when compared to ours, that it ſeems to me we ſhould not ſuffer ourſelves though the King ſhould commit blunders to be routed by his miſtakes.

The Monarch becomes very difficult equally to obſerve. He reverts to the [illegible]monies of German etiquette. [illegible]ced he will not receive foreign- [illegible]leaſt for ſome time. I know all

that can be learnt from ſubaltern ſpies; from valets, courtiers, ſecretaries, and the intemperate tongue of Prince Henry; but there are only two modes of influencing; which are to give, or rather to give birth to, ideas in the maſter, or in his miniſters. —In the maſter!—How, ſince he is not to be approached?—In the miniſters!—It is neither very eaſy nor very prudent to ſpeak to them, on public affairs, I not being in a public character; and the diſcuſſions which chance affords are ſhort, vague, and incomplete. If I am ſuppoſed capable of buſineſs, I ought to be ſent to ſome place, where I ſhould have a public character. I am afraid I ſhall here coſt more than I am worth.

Count Goertz goes to Holland; I know not whether inſtead of Thulemeyer or *ad tempus*. He is followed by the ſon of Count Arnim, who is a young ſhoot for the corps diplomatique. Goertz is not a man without talents; when ſent into Ruſſia, under every kind of diſadvantage, he obtained a good knowledge of the country: he is cold, dry, and ungracious; but ſubtle,

tle, maſter of his temper, though violent, and a man of obſervation. That he is of the Engliſh party is certain; he is loyal to Hertzberg, and convinced that the alliance of Holland and France is ſo unnatural it muſt ſoon end. I own I think as he does, eſpecially ſhould we abuſe our power.

A new ambaſſador is appointed, *in petto*, for France. I have not yet been able to diſcover who; but Hertzberg ſupports the ridiculous Goltz with all his power. Schulemberg daily declines in favour. The maritime company have already loſt their monopoly of coffee, of which there are four millions and a half pounds weight conſumed in the various provinces of the Pruſſian monarchy. Hence we may obſerve that the free uſe of coffee, which daily becomes general in Germany, is the cauſe that the conſumption of beer is gradually and much leſs. The ſame company may be deprived of a prodigious profit on ſugars; but it will be in vain to deſtroy old monopolies only to ſubſtitute

new, though they ſhould be for the profit of the King.

The perſonal debts of his Majeſty are paying off by the miniſter Blumenthal; it is ſaid there are tolerably great deductions made, but not unjuſtly, as I imagine, for there are no complaints on the ſubject. Excluſive of the royal treaſury, Frederick II. has left ſavings ſo great that they will ſcarcely be abſorbed by the perſonal debts of Frederick William II. It is ſaid he will pay off his Italian opera, and every body believes there will be a French opera inſtead. This certainly would be no trifling means of ſupport to intrigue.

The freedom of ſcrutiny is reſtored to the academy, and the Germans are henceforward to be admitted members. I regard the curatorſhip of this body as a favour conferred on, and a tolerable [illegible] of power for, Hertzberg; who will be curator by title, and preſident in reality. The preſidency of the academy is ſo truly miniſterial that the late Frederick [illegible] it himſelf, after the deceaſe of the [illegible] and

and moroſe Maupertuis. 'Count Hertzberg ſaid to me, at court—"You are a "compliment in my debt."—'On what 'occaſion?'—"I am curator of the aca- "demy; which title gives me greater plea- "ſure, and in my opinion is more honour- "able than a ribband."—Forty perſons heard our diſcourſe.—'Certainly,' replied I, 'he who is the miniſter of knowledge 'may well be called the prime miniſter.'

The King will not ruin himſelf in gifts; he has hitherto beſtowed only prebendaries, which coſt him nothing, except a penſion of three hundred crowns on General Levald.—I am informed that he has juſt granted one of eight hundred crowns—to the poet Rammler. It would perhaps have been more delicate not to have begun by penſioning fame, and her trumpet.

LETTER XIX.

September 2d, 1786.

ALL circumſtances confirm my predictions. Prince Henry and his nephew have almoſt quarrelled. The uncle is inconſolable, and thinks of retiring to Rheinſberg. He will almoſt certainly return during the journey of the King through Pruſſia and Sileſia. Probably we ſhall have no great changes before the Monarch has performed theſe journies, if then. There is one however beſide thoſe I have before ſpoken of, which is remarkable; and that is, a commiſſion to examine the adminiſtration of the cuſtoms; what is to be abrogated, what preſerved, and what qualified, eſpecially in the exciſe.

Mr. Werder, a miniſter of ſtate and the intimate friend of Hertzberg, the enemy of

of Schulemburg who brought him into place, and father-in-law to the ſecretary of the Engliſh embaſſy, or perhaps to his wife, is at the head of this commiſſion. The other members are ridiculouſly ſelected; but the very project of ſuch a reform is moſt agreeable to the nation; as much ſo as the penſion of eight hundred crowns granted to the poet Rammler, and the promiſe of admiſſion of Germans into the academy is to the diſtributors of renown. It remains to be ſeen whether the people have not been led to hope too much; and whether it is not requiſite to be certain of ſubſtitutes, previous to the promiſe of relief.

The King goes to Pruſſia attended by Meſſieurs Hertzberg, (For the King to be attended by a miniſter out of his department is unexampled.) Goltz, ſurnamed the Tartar, Boulet, a French engineer, General Goertz, Gaudi, and Biſhopſwerder.

This Goltz the Tartar is he who, in the laſt campaign of the ſeven year's war, raiſed

raiſed an inſurrection of fifty thouſand Tartars, in the Crimea and the neighbouring countries; who were marching to make a diverſion in favour of the King of Pruſſia, and had arrived at Bender, when peace was concluded. Notwithſtanding this, Goltz can boaſt of but little abilities; except that he is a good officer, and ardently active. He was indebted for his great and ſingular ſucceſs to a Dutchman, named Biſkamp, whom he met with in the Crimea. He attached himſelf to this very able and enterpriſing man, who underſtood the language, knew the country, and ſerved Frederick II. according to his wiſhes; by whom indeed he was well paid. This Biſkamp is at Warſaw, and there forgotten, which is very ſtrange. I have ſuppoſed the relating this anecdote, which is but little known, might be intereſting.

Boulet is an honeſt man, for whom [illegible] King ſhews ſome affection, and to [illegible] he is indebted for all he knows co[illegible] fortification.

General Goertz is the brother of the Goertz who is going to Holland, but not his equal; he is artful and ſubtle, and his good faith is of a ſuſpicious complexion.

Gaudi is the brother of the celebrated general of the ſame name; little known hitherto as the miniſter of the Pruſſian department, but capable, well-informed, firm, decided, and indubitably the man moſt proper to influence interior arrangements, in reconſtructing the grand directory.

Biſhopſwerder you are acquainted with; he and Boulet each lately received the commiſſion of lieutenant colonel.

The King has told Schulemburg that, on his return from Pruſſia, he will determine which of his nine departments he ſhall be deprived of. He and his wife are the only miniſterial family who are not invited to court. The probabilities all are Schulemburg will demand leave to reſhould his colleagues continue to humble him, and the King to treat him with contempt. But Struenſee probably

will keep his place, and he then propoſes to act, in concert with us, in our public funds; eſpecially ſhould the King, as is apparent, commit to his charge the four millions of crowns (about ſixteen millions of French livres, or near ſeven hundred thouſand pounds ſterling) which he means to ſet apart, for the operations of previous finance. Struenſee is the only man who underſtands them. This is a ſubject not to be neglected, as it hitherto has been, even ſo far as to render it impoſſible for me to act with propriety. We might profit by him, during peace; but if unfortunately the news which is whiſpered be true, concerning the increaſing ill health of the Elector of Bavaria, depend upon war, for I then hold it inevitable. Is this a time for us to exiſt from day to day, as we do, when each month (for there is a probability at any time, that he ſhould die within a month) menaces all Europe with irrecable confuſion?

Mr. de Larrey, ſent from the Stadtholder to compliment the King, openly affirms

affirms it is impoſſible the diſputes of Holland ſhould be appeaſed without effuſion of blood; and the ſpeculations of Hertzberg upon this ſubject are boundleſs; but the ſecret is well kept, by thoſe who ſurround the King.

LETTER XX.

TO THE DUKE DE **.

September 2d, 1786.

BY what fatality, my Lord, has it happened that I have not received your letter, dated the ſixteenth, till this day? And, ſtill more eſpecially, why was it not written ſome weeks ſooner? The importance of the propoſition with which it concludes will never be fully underſtood; and which, made at any other time, except when the King was dying, would have been willingly accepted. It will never be known, had it been preſented ſoon enough, how much it might have effected, impeded, and indicated, relative to a Prince whoſe underſtanding perhaps is not great, but who poſſeſſes gratitude, and who will much more certainly be an honeſt man than a great King; ſo that his heart, rather than his mind,

mind, ought to have been appealed to; and that at a time when he was far otherwiſe acceſſible than at preſent; walled in, as he is, by ſyſtem and intrigue. How does it happen that you are the only perſon of the country you inhabit who conceived this plan? How could the cabinet of Verſailles give up the merit of offering trifling ſums to Serilly? How could it permit the Duke of Courland to ſecure the claim of having huſhed the loud cries of creditors to ſilence? How impolitic and diſaſtrous are the ſordid views, the confined plans, and ſhort-ſighted prudence of certain perſons! In what a ſituation would ſuch an act have placed us, as it would me perſonally, in his opinion! All things then would have been poſſible, would have been eaſy to me.—But of this we muſt think no more; we muſt only remember this is a new proof that reaſon is always on your ſide.

Since the death of the King I have ſent ſupplies of information, to your cabinet, reſpecting the *Aulic phaſes* (*t*), and my diſ-

(*t*) Court changes, or appearances. T.

patch of to-day, a great part of which no doubt our common friend will read to you, is a ſtatement, according to the beſt of my abilities, of preſent and future contingencies. You will there perceive Prince Henry has accompliſhed his own deſtiny; that his trifling character has, on this occaſion, weighty as it was, been ſtranded on the rock of his exceſſive vanity, as it has before ſo often been; that he has at once diſplayed an exceſſive deſire of power, diſguſting haughtineſs, inſupportable pedantry, and a diſdain of intrigue, at the ſame time that his conduct was one continuation of petty, low, dirty cabal; that he has deſpiſed the people in power, while he himſelf is ſurrounded by no creature who is not evidently either fooliſh, knaviſh, or contemptible, one noble man, Baron Knyphauſen, excepted, and he is in daily danger of being carried off by an apoplexy; that, in fine, no man can be more out of favour, and particularly of confidence, or can have put himſelf into a ſituation in which confidence, and favour, will be more difficult to regain.

I there-

I therefore perſiſt in my opinion that the Duke of Brunſwick, who is maſter of himſelf, by no means oſtentatious, and who is poſſeſſed of profound talents, will be the man; not of the preſent moment, but of the moment of neceſſity. My reaſons are numerous, and ſo deduced as, in my opinion, not to admit of contradiction, the order of events and circumſtances, which I ſee and foreſee conſidered. All this does but render the execution of your project the more neceſſary, and which I regard as very practicable, with ſome ſmall exceptions, if executed by the perſons in whom you ought to confide; ſhould you with your natural dexterity, and irreſiſtible ſeduction, purſue the plan of intereſting the vanity of the MASTER, ſo as to make it his own act, and, as you have ſo well expreſſed it, that it ſhall be he himſelf who ſhall inform his miniſters of his intentions.

I repeat, your project is the more immediately neceſſary becauſe that England cabals, with great induſtry, in her own behalf, under the pretence of the intereſts

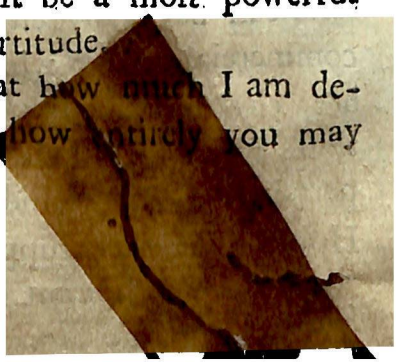
of Holland, which are very much at heart, in the cabinet of Berlin. I own that what I have often inſinuated here, namely, that the Pruſſian power is not ſufficiently conſolidated, and that, if oppoſed to ſtand the ſhock of France and Auſtria combined, it muſt be reduced to powder, is a propoſition not ſo unanſwerable but that, thanks to Ruſſia, there are many objections to be made; and ſo there always will be, even in ſuppoſitions the moſt unfavourable to Pruſſia. 1. Becauſe this would but be commencing a deplorable career of ſanguinary contentions, under the direction of the Emperor, who is ſo little able to direct that he may be affirmed to be the leaſt military of men. 2. That the utmoſt ſucceſs would leave a Prince without counterpoiſe in Europe, who has claims and pretenſions of every kind. Laſtly, and more eſpecially, this would be painfully to ſeek that which the nature of events ſpontaneouſly offers; like as ſpring makes the apparently dry and ſapleſs tree bud and bloom.

There

There are ſome errors in cyphering, which are the cauſe that I do not perfectly underſtand the grounds of your diſſenſion with me, concerning the maritime ſyſtem; but I too well know the extreme juſtneſs of your mind, which does not remain ſatisfied with phantoms, to imagine our opinions are very oppoſite. And, for my own part, I have never pretended to ſay that we ought not to maintain a navy which ſhould make our commerce reſpected. The queſtion to determine is—What ought the extent of this commerce to be, which is to be effectually protected? You like me perceive that no alliance with England can be ſolidly eſtabliſhed, but by a commercial treaty, which ſhould have exact, clear, and diſtinct lines of demarkation: for, were unlimitted freedom of trade permitted, they would be the ſufferers. How might they ſupport the rivalſhip? Alſo, if we do not cut away the voracious ſuckers from the root of the tree, how ſhall we prevent the Indies, and Antilles, from eternally continuing the apple of diſcord?

Be this as it may, my Lord, do not ſuffer yourſelf to be diſcouraged, or diſguſted, by difficulties. Aſcend the heighth with a firm though meaſured ſtep, and with inflexible conſtancy. You have found the only unbeaten track which, in theſe times, can lead to political fame, and which beſt may tend to the pacification of the earth. How admirable is it to unite the talents of the hero, the principles of the ſage, and the projects of the philoſopher! By a ſingle diplomatic act, to reverſe all the obſolete forms, all pitiable rubricks, all the deſtructive arts of modern politics, would be to gain no vulgar crown; and a proſpect ſo magnificent muſt be a moſt powerful ſupport to your fortitude.

I need not repeat how much I am devoted to you, or how entirely you may diſpoſe of me,



LET-

LETTER XXI.

September 5th, 1786.

IT is impoſſible that I ſhould ſend you intelligence more exact, concerning the ſituation of Prince Henry with the King, than that which my preceding letters contain. The Prince himſelf no longer conceals the truth; and, like all weak men, paſſing from one extreme to the other, he clamorouſly affirms the country is undone; that prieſts, blockheads, proſtitutes, and Engliſhmen are haſtening its deſtruction; and, by the intemperance of his language, confirms what the indiſcretion of the Chevalier d'***, and the perſonal confidence of the uncle to the nephew, when he was only Prince of Pruſſia, probably before but too certainly told Frederick William II. I repeat, he has completed his diſgrace, in the private eſtimation of the King. It is my opinion that, if he may be permitted, he will either quit

this country, in which he has not one friend, one paraſite, except in the moſt ſubaltern and abject claſs, or will become inſane, or will die: ſuch is my augury.

Not that I am convinced that the adminiſtration muſt always be committed to ſubalterns. The King has too much dread of ſeeming to be governed, not to have the neceſſity of being governed. Why ſhould he be the firſt man who ſhould pretend to be what he is not? Frederick II. who by nature was ſo perfectly deſigned to govern, never teſtified a fear of being governed; he was certain of the contrary. The preſent King fears he ſhall, and therefore ſhall be. While public affairs are tranſacted ſeparately, he will not ſeem to be; for nothing is more eaſy in this country than to receive and to pay. The machinery is ſo wound up that the ſurplus of revenue is great indeed. It is eaſy to pay ſome attention to detail, to keep watch over the police, to make ſome ſubordinate changes, and to coquet with the nation. And here be it ſaid, by the way, there ſeems a determination of humbling the vanity of foreigners;

foreigners; ſo that, as I have always affirmed, the *gallomania* (*u*) of Prince Henry has been very prejudicial to us. Some good will be done; for it is not here as in other kingdoms, where the paſſing from evil to good is ſometimes worſe than evil itſelf, and where there is terror in reſiſtance. All is here done *ad nutum*. Beſide, the cords are ſo ſtretched they cannot but relax: the people have been ſo oppreſſed, have ſuffered ſuch vexation, ſuch extortion, that they muſt find eaſe. All will proceed therefore, and almoſt without aid, while foreign politics ſhall continue calm and uniform; but, whenever a gun is fired, or even at the firſt lowering ſtorm, with what a petty craſh will this ſcaffolding of mediocrity come to the ground! How will theſe ſubaltern miniſters ſhrink; from the ſlave at the oar to the terrified ſteerſman! How will they call for a pilot's aid!

Who muſt be this pilot?—The Duke of Brunſwick. Of this I have no doubt. Every little accident, in the day of trou-

(*u*) Enthuſiaſm in favour of France. T.

ble,

ble, is only an additional aptitude to fear. Beſide that the Prince is, of all men, him who beſt can conduct little vanity: he will ſatisfy himſelf with appearing the ſervant of ſervants; the moſt polite, the moſt humble, and indubitably the moſt adroit of courtiers; while, at the ſame time, his iron hand will fetter all paltry views, all trifling intrigues, all inferior factions. Such is the horoſcope I draw; nor do I think, at preſent, one more rational can be erected.

Hertzberg is the man who muſt be managed in the ſtate; and for this Count de Eſt** is not qualified, becauſe he formerly deſerted him too much; and he well perceived it would have been indelicate, and ſtupid, to have veered too ſuddenly. Hertzberg however may ruin himſelf by his boaſting, and even by his oſtentation. This is a mode of effecting the fall of miniſters which the courtiers will employ, becauſe of the character of the King, and which may ſucceed.

But Holland and her convulſions are the ſubject of preſent conſideration. There

is a conviction that we can do what we pleaſe; and, though I am far from thinking this to be incontrovertible, I ſtill think that, were we to ſay to the party that has gained ſo much ground, probably from a conviction that we were ready to march up to their ſupport—(For how would they have dared to make themſelves reſponſible, if they had poſſeſſed no ſecurities for ſuch future contingencies as may be expected?) —I repeat, were we to ſay, *You muſt go no further*, we ſhould be obeyed. It will be ſuppoſed, I neither pretend nor wiſh to give advice. I am too far removed from truth which I can only inſpect through the magnifying glaſs of paſſion; and Count d'Eſt** informs me of nothing: but I can diſtinctly perceive that the hurricane, which is forming in thoſe marſhes, may extend to other countries. The French embaſſy of Berlin will not ſay thus much to you, becauſe they do not ſee things in the ſame light, but are perſuaded that the intereſt of the brother will have no influence on the connexions of the King. Of this I doubt, and have good reaſon ſo

to

to doubt. Hertzberg is wholly Dutch, for it is the only decent manner in which he can be Engliſh; and he may greatly influence foreign politics, although he does not underſtand them. As, the other day, he was rehearſing his eternal repetition of—THE KING WILL BE THE PLEDGE OF THE STADTHOLDER—I ſaid to him—"I reſpect the King too much to aſk who "ſhall be the pledge of the pledge; but I "dare venture to aſk—*How will the King "make his pledge reſpected?* What ſhall "happen when France ſhall demonſtrate "that the Stadtholder has broken engage-"ments, entered into under her ſanction? "The King is not the brother-in-law of "Holland; and the affairs of Naples is "ſufficient proof that family interventions "may be eluded. What can the King ac-"compliſh againſt Holland? And is he "not too equitable to require us, who "cannot wiſh that the Dutch ſhould be-"come Engliſh, to riſk our alliance for "the knight-errant of the Engliſh?"—To all this Hertzberg, who beholds nothing on this ſublunary earth but HERTZ-

BERG

BERG and PRUSSIA, made vague replies; but, at the words—" What can the King " accompliſh againſt Holland ?"—he muttered, with a gloomy air—*Holland will not defy him I believe.* Once again, beware of Holland; where, by way of parentheſis, the Engliſh legation affirms that we have bought the town of Schiedam; that M. de Calonne in particular inundates the country with gold; and, in a word, that he is perſonally the brand of diſcord.

I have reſerved the queſtions with which your letter begins to conclude with; firſt becauſe they relate to affairs the leaſt preſſing; ſince it appears impoſſible that the Emperor ſhould make any attempts, on Turkey in Europe, before the coming ſpring; and next it was neceſſary I ſhould previouſly recollect myſelf; the concurring circumſtances of the death of the King and the acceſſion of Frederick William, being the ſubjects which have almoſt excluſively demanded my attention, and induced me to defer more diſtant objects to future conſideration. Still I fear mine is a barren harveſt, Pruſſia not having any conti-

nued intercourſe with theſe wide lying countries, which are more than four hundred leagues diſtant; for ſhe has neither any great merchant nor any ſyſtem of politics, becauſe that the corps diplomatic of Pruſſia is extremely deficient.

As to thoſe individuals that are met with in ſociety, they are ignorant, and can afford no information. Buckholz, the Pruſſian envoy to Warſaw, a man of ordinary capacity but active, and Huttel, who is in the ſame capacity at Peterſburg, an intelligent perſon, write word that Ruſſia is more pacific than Turkey; and that the internal Ottoman provinces call for war. The frontier provinces, appertaining to the Tartars, certainly are not friendly to Ruſſia. Moldavia and Wallachia are governed by Hoſpodars; who, being Greeks, moſt certainly are ſold to whoever will purchaſe them, conſequently to Ruſſia. The Emperor deceives them, and is hated there as elſewhere. I ſhall ſpeak further of this, and ſhall endeavour to give a ſketch of a journey along the frontiers of theſe countries, which ſhould be undertaken in the

the diſguiſe of a trader, and kept rigidly ſecret, by which the ſtate of the frontiers, the magazines, the propenſities of the people, &c. &c. might be known, and what is to be hoped or feared, if it be found neceſſary to arm (in which caſe it is very probable Pruſſia would voluntarily aid us with all her powers) that is to ſay, if the Emperor ſhould determine to pay no reſpect to our remonſtrances, as he has twice done before.

Perhaps I might be more uſeful, employed in ſuch a journey, than at Berlin, where at every ſtep I tread on danger, and ſhall ſo continue to do, unleſs I have credentials, at leaſt as an aſſiſtant; which perhaps would be the more proper becauſe it ſometimes happens that ſuch an interlocutor is ſpoken to with greater freedom than an ambaſſador; for the refuſals he meets, or the propoſals he makes, have no miniſterial conſequences; and thus each party gains information, without either being offended.

Pay ſerious attention to this, I requeſt. In vain you recommend me to act privately;

ſy; permit me to inform you that, in deſpight of all my efforts, this is impracticable. I have too much celebrity, too much intercourſe with Prince Henry, who is a true Joan of Arc, and who has no ſecrets of any kind. I am made to ſpeak when I am ſilent; and when I ſay any thing it is unfaithfully repeated. It is impoſſible to conceive all that has been attributed to me, ſince the King's death; that is to ſay, ſince an epocha when I have taken advantage of the interruption of ſocial meetings to keep myſelf recluſe, and to labour only by mining. Count d'Eſt** diſcredits me all in his power. The Engliſh embaſſy exclaims *Fœnum habet in cornu, longè fuge.* The favourites keep me at a diſtance; the wits, the prieſts, and the myſtics have formed a league, &c. &c. Each fears an invaſion of his domains, becauſe my real buſineſs is not known. I cannot remain and be of any utility, unleſs you ſhall find means to inform Count Finckenſtein that I am only a good citizen, and a good obſerver; but that theſe I am, and that I am authorized to give my opinion.

nion. I cannot doubt but that this minister is very desirous these few words should be said. I am however in conscience obliged to repeat, the part I have to play daily becomes more difficult and more invidious; and that, in order to be truly useful, I must have some character given me, or be employed elsewhere.

Prince Henry at present reads his recantation; he again pretends Hertzberg has received his death blow, and that his downfal will be instantaneous. He relates miracles of the Duke of Brunswick, and flatters himself he shall, soon or late, have great influence—"He will be in no "haste. He will ply to windward six "months." He affirms the English projects are absolutely abortive. Hertzberg he is confident acts as if he had lost all understanding, and precisely as if he, Prince Henry, had counseled him, in order to render his fall more headlong, &c. &c. &c. In fine, his discourse is a mixture of enthusiasm and rhodomontade, of presumption and anxiety; a flux of words, that confirm nothing; or of half phrases, with-

out any determinate meaning, except of exaggeration and tumor. Hence, it is difficult to conjecture whether he deceives himſelf or wiſhes to deceive; whether he maintains the cauſe of vanity, feaſts on illuſion, or if he has recently any ray of hope; for, as I have ſaid, it is not impoſſible but that Hertzberg, by his boaſting, ſhould effect his own ruin. Prince Henry preſſes me to requeſt the court to ſend me ſome credentials, while the King ſhall be in Pruſſia and Sileſia; or at leaſt to write concerning me to Count Finckenſtein, by whom the intelligence may be communicated to the King.

No change in the new habits of the Monarch. Madam Rietz has been but once to ſee him; but, on Saturday laſt, he wrote to his natural ſon by that woman, and directed his letter—"To my ſon "Alexander Count de la Marche (*w*)." He has ennobled and even made a Baroneſs of the miſtreſs of the Margrave of Schwedt (Baroneſs of Stoltzenberg, which

(*w*) Meaning one of the marches of Brandenburg. T.

is

is the title of a Barony, worth about eight thouſand crowns a year, given her by the Margrave) who is nothing more than a tolerably pretty German girl, formerly an actreſs, by whom the Margrave has a ſon. It was not thought proper to refuſe the only thing this old Prince of ſeventy-ſeven wiſhed to or could requeſt. Perhaps too it was a pretext to do as much for Madame Rietz. The huſband of this lady is Erzkaemmerer (*x*), a place nearly correſponding to that of firſt valet-de-chambre, and treaſurer of the privy purſe; but it is ſuppoſed he will do nothing more than get rich: his wife hitherto has never had any ſerious influence.

The court marſhal, Ritwitz, having ſuddenly become raving mad, after a quarrel with one of the proviſion officers, Marwitz, who is a totally inſignificant perſon, has been propoſed to the King. "He will "do as well as another," replied the Monarch. Is this thoughtleſſneſs; or is it fear of importance being annexed to a place which in reality but little merits impor-

(*x*) Arch chamberlain. T.

importance? This queſtion it is impoſſible to anſwer.

Luccheſini increaſes in his pretenſions; he demands a place in the finance or commercial department; perhaps the direction of the maritime company, but this would be a very lofty ſtride. Annexed to wit and information, he has ſome qualities to which ambition is ſeldom allied; at moſt they will entitle him to become a member of the corps diplomatique, of which he is capable. I believe this Italian to be one of the moſt ardent in keeping me at a diſtance from the King; who will not indeed be eaſy of acceſs before the winter.

The commiſſion of regulations has hitherto rather appeared a cauſtic than a healing and paternal remedy. There is much more talk of the ſums the employment of which cannot be juſtified than of eaſing the exciſe. Verder the preſident is beſide known to be the perſonal enemy of ſome of the members of the tax adminiſtration. This perhaps has occaſioned ſuſpicions. Verder however was propoſed by the Duke of Brunſwick, who in fact had need

need of his aid, in ſome affairs that relate to his country.

Hertzberg has certainly been in a ſtorm, and the credit of Count Finekenſtein appears to be augmented, though I confeſs the ſhade of increaſing favour is ſcarcely perceptible. I perſiſt in believing that Hertzberg is immoveable, unleſs by his want of addreſs.

LETTER XXII.

September 8th, 1786.

THE ſixth, at a review of the artillery, I diſmounted my horſe to attend the King, in the front of the ranks. The Duke of Brunſwick joined me; and, as we talked of mortars, bombs, and batteries, we gradually removed to a diſtance. As ſoon as we were alone, he began to ſpeak to me of the prodigious knowledge I had of the country; giving me to underſtand he had read my memorial to the King. He then reverted to the new reign; and ſuddenly afterward to foreign politics. Having entered at length into the ſubject, and ſpoken more than is neceſſary here to repeat, he added—"In God's name, arrange affairs "in Holland; free the King of his fears. "Muſt the Stadtholder never be other than "*ad honores?* You are in full credit there, "and this credit you cannot loſe; if you "did,

" did, the party by which you obtained it
" would be too much expoſed to danger.
" I repeat, put us at our eaſe, and I will
" anſwer on my head for every thing elſe:
" but uſe diſpatch, I conjure you. On
" Sunday I ſhall depart for Brunſwick;
" come and viſit me, while the King is
" gone into Sileſia; we can converſe freely
" there and no where elſe. But write to
" your friends that they ought to exert all
" their influence to engage the French
" miniſtry to uſe moderation with the
" Prince of Orange, who cannot be pro-
" ſcribed without ſtate convulſions. Things
" are not ripe for his aboliſhment; give
" him protection. France cannot render
" a greater ſervice to Europe. What is
" your court yet to learn thoſe forms
" which effect no change, but which give
" every ſupport?" Here we ſeparated, becauſe the ſubject began to be too intereſting. But tell me—Ought I not to go to Brunſwick?

To this I ſhould add that Count Goertz has taken eight Chaſſeurs with him, who are to convey letters to the frontiers of the

Pruſſian ſtates, in order that no diſpatches may be ſent by land, nor paſs through foreign hands. The Duke of Brunſwick has repeated what Prince Henry had told me, and which I forgot to inform you of, that one of the principal motives for ſelecting Count Goertz was his former friendſhip with M. de Veyrac.

From my converſation with the Duke, I conclude that he is or ſoon will be maſter of affairs; and this explains the new fit of joy, hope, and preſumption, which has ſeized on Prince Henry, who has been perſuaded by the cunning Duke that, if he will but have patience, the ſcepter will devolve on him; and that he, the Duke, will be no more than high conſtable. It is ſaid Koenigſberg will be appointed field marſhal. This, added to the ſmooth turn which the Duke has given diſcuſſions, and pecuniary matters, has turned the Prince's brain, who told me the other day—"That "the Duke was the moſt loyal of men, "and his beſt friend; that he owned a "fortnight ago he was of a different opi-"nion; but that, &c. &c."—So that the meta-

metamorphoſis has been produced within this fortnight. In truth there is no real difference between a fool and a man of underſtanding, who thus can ſuffer himſelf to be deceived; as little is there between a fool and a man of underſtanding, who can be perſuaded that a fool is a man of underſtanding.—Both theſe things daily happen to Prince Henry. On the thirteenth he departs for Rheinſberg, and is to return the day before the King.

The fervor of the novice appears ſomewhat to abate. I have good reaſon to believe that Mademoiſelle Voſs is ready to capitulate. Ogling, frequent converſations (for the preſent aſſiduity at Schoenhauſen is not paid to the Queen Dowager) preſents accepted, (A canonicate for her brother) and an attempt at influence. (It is ſhe who placed Mademoiſelle Vierey in the ſervice of the Princeſs Frederica of Pruſſia.) To all is to grant. Since the acceſſion, all circumſtances denote how dazzling is the luſtre of a diadem; but ſo much the better; for her fall only can render her but little dangerous. She is wholly

wholly Engliſh, and is not incapable of intrigue. When we reflect that the credit of a Madame du Trouſſel had the power, under a Frederick II. to beſtow places of importance, we may imagine what may happen under another King, as ſoon as it ſhall be diſcovered that intrigue may be employed at the court of Berlin, as well as at other courts.

Madame Rietz yeſterday received a diamond worth four thouſand crowns: ſhe will probably be put on the invalid liſt, with ſome money, and perhaps a title.

Her ſon, at preſent, has publicly the title of Count de la Marche; (or Count Brandenburg) and has a ſeparate eſtabliſhment.

General Kalckſtein, diſgraced by the late King, and regretted by every body, has received a regiment.

At preſent, and till I hear other news relative to Berlin, accept the following important anecdote; and which I think it neceſſary to ſend, in the now doubtful ſtate of the health of the Empreſs of Ruſſia. About ſix years ago a young foreigner, and

and a gentleman, in the ſervice of France, was preſented to the G**-D***, by a lady who had been educated with her, and who has remained her intimate friend. It was the intention of this young gentleman to enter into the Ruſſian ſervice: he was preſented to the Grand Duke, by the G**-D***, who warmly ſolicited, and while he was preſent, a place for the youth in the ſervice of her huſband.

The young favourite, well-formed and handſome, often viſited the G**-D***. Invited to her palace, feaſted, diſtinguiſhed, and continually receiving new favours, he fell in love; of which the G**-D*** was informed by his extreme confuſion. One grand court-day, at a maſked ball, in the evening, ſhe had him conducted by one of her women into an obſcure apartment, and ſufficiently diſtant from thoſe where the court was held. In a little time the conductreſs quitted him, and adviſed him to wait; and the G**-D*** arrived in a black domino. She removed her maſk, took the youth by the hand, led him to a ſopha, and made him ſit down by her ſide.

The

The G**-D*** then told him this was the moment for him to chuſe, between the ſervice of France and the ſervice of Ruſſia. A certain time however was allowed him, to come to a deciſion. Coquettry and even careſſes ſucceeded. Wavering, taken by ſurprize, diſtracted between love and fear, the youth behaved with exceſſive aukwardneſs, at the beginning of the interview. The G**-D*** however encouraged him, inſpired him with audacity, and made him every advance, till at length he vanquiſhed his timidity, and indeed became very daring.

To this ſcene of tranſports, adieus ſuddenly ſucceeded, which partook as much of terror, and of deſpotiſm, as of love. The G**-D*** commanded the youth, in the moſt tender but the moſt abſolute tone, to inform the Grand Duke that he could not accept the rank of captain, which was intended to be given him.—She added that he muſt depart, inſtantly depart; and that his head muſt anſwer ſhould the leaſt circumſtance tranſpire. She at the ſame time preſſed him to demand ſome mark

mark of remembrance. The terrified youth, confuſed and trembling, requeſted a black ribband, which ſhe took from her domino. He received the pledge, and ſo totally loſt all recollection that he left the ball, and quitted Peterſburgh, without contriving any means of correſpondence, arrangements for the future, or precautions of any kind, in favour of his fortune. In a few days he left Ruſſia, travelling day and night, and did not write to the Grand Duke till he had paſſed the frontiers. He received a very gracious anſwer; and here the affair ended.

This perſon is returned to, and is now in, the ſervice of France. He has little firmneſs, but does not want underſtanding. Were he guided he might certainly be uſeful; at leaſt attempts might be made, after ſo extraordinary an accident. But for this it would be neceſſary he ſhould go to Ruſſia before there is any change of Monarch, and ſhould tempt his fortune, now that the G**-D*** has not ſo much fear. I am not perſonally acquainted with him, but I can diſpoſe of his moſt intimate friend,

friend, in whom every dependance may be placed. I have not thought proper to name the hero of the romance, whom it is not neceſſary to know, unleſs it ſhould be intended to afford him employment. If, on the contrary, it ſhould be thought proper for him to purſue any ſuch plan, I will name him inſtantly.

The Elector of Bavaria is certainly not in good health; he may not live to ſee winter; and it is ſcarcely probable he will reach the ſpring. I ſhall go from hence to Dreſden, that I may not appear to abſent myſelf purpoſely for the Duke of Brunſwick. I ſhall remain there ſeven or eight days, as long at Brunſwick, and three or four weeks in the whole. My journey will be exactly of the ſame duration as that of the King, in whoſe abſence there is nothing to be learnt, and I ſhall certainly profit by my peregrinations, and learn more at Brunſwick, in a week, than I ſhould here divine in three months.

My letter is too long to ſpeak of Turkey in Europe. I doubt the Emperor cannot be prevented, if he is not deſtitute of all

capacity, of marching any day he ſhall pleaſe to the mouth of the Danube; but on the ſame day he muſt become the natural enemy of Ruſſia, who will find in his preſence one too many on the Black Sea, and this may render the combined projects abortive. I am aſſured that Moldavia and Wallachia deſire to be under the Emperor's government. This I cannot believe, ſince his own peaſants fly their country, and even go to Poland, rather than remain in his power. But the before mentioned provinces are abſolutely unprotected, and I think no oppoſition can be made, except in Romelia and Bulgaria. In fine, I believe we only, by promiſes or threats, are able to prevent the Emperor from labouring at this grand demolition. If we believe the rhodomontadoes of Peterſburg, Ruſſia is ſingly capable of the work. But, were ſhe to attempt it, what would ſhe be on the ſucceeding day? You are not ignorant ſhe has received ſome check; that Prince Heraclius has been obliged to deſert her cauſe; that ſhe is once again reduced to defend

Mount

Mount Caucaſus as a frontier; that ſhe cannot at preſent march into the heart of the Ottoman territories; and that perhaps this would be the beſt moment for recovering the Crimea. Should all theſe particulars be true, and theſe conjectures well founded, it is impoſſible that I ſhould know any one of them ſo perfectly as you do yourſelf.

The diſpute, relative to the bailliage of Wuſterhauſen, has been very nobly ended by the King. He has retaken it, but has made an annual grant of fifty thouſand crowns to Prince Henry; ſeventeen thouſand of which the latter is obliged to pay to Prince Ferdinand. The bailliage does not produce more than about forty-three thouſand.

Prince Ferdinand at preſent recants the renunciation to the Margraviate of Anſpach. As it is known that Prince Ferdinand has no will of his own, it is evident he receives his impulſe from Prince Henry, and the more ſo, becauſe this is the *manet altâ mente repoſtum* againſt Count Hertzberg. It would be difficult to imagine any

any thing more ſilly, or better calculated eternally to embroil him with the King.

I have always regarded the ſingularity of Romanzow, of not going into mourning and his violence with Count Fincken-ſtein concerning not ſending a complimentary envoy to Peterſburgh, which occaſioned the Count to demand whether he had orders from his court to ſpeak in ſuch a ſtile, as the effervescence of a young man; eſpecially ſince Baron Reeden, the Dutch envoy, did not likewiſe go into mourning from œconomy, which ſhews it was not conſidered as a matter of any great importance. As theſe debates very ridiculouſly occupied the corps diplomatique for a week; and as the Count d'Eſt**, who has conducted himſelf well on the occaſion, muſt have mentioned it, I thought it to no purpoſe to write on the ſubject. But as Romanzow, of all the foreign ambaſſadors, did not attend the funeral at Potſdam, this mark, either of thoughtleſſneſs or diſſatisfaction, was felt; and, the time neceſſary to receive orders being paſt, I ſend informa-

tion of the fact, to which I do not however pay ſo much attention as the good people in the pit, though it has greatly diſpleaſed the boxes. The cabinet of Berlin muſt long have known that friendſhip, on the part of Ruſſia, is hopeleſs till the acceſſion of the Grand Duke; but it is impoſſible to butt with more force, or greater diſreſpect, than Romanzow has done.

LETTER XXIII.

September 10th, 1786.

THE following are ſome particulars concerning what happened, on the day of interment, at Potſdam.

The King arrived at ſeven o'clock. At half paſt ſeven he went with the Princeſſes, Frederica and Louiſa, of Brunſwick, the young ladies Kniſbec, Voſs, &c. to ſee the chamber of Frederick. It was ſmall, hung with violet-coloured cloth, and loaded with ornaments, of black and ſilver. At the far end was an alcove, on which the coffin was placed, under the portrait of the hero. This coffin was richly ornamented with cloth of ſilver, laced with gold. Toward the head was a calque of gold, the ſword that Frederick wore, his military ſtaff, the ribband of the Black Eagle, and gold ſpurs. Round the coffin were eight ſtools, on

which were placed eight golden cuſhions, meant to ſuſtain,

1. The crown.
2. The golden globe and croſs.
3. The gold box containing the ſeal.
4. The electoral cap.
5. The ſcepter.
6. The order of the golden eagle, of diamonds and other precious ſtones.
7. The royal ſword.
8. The royal hand.

The baluſtrade was hung with violet-coloured velvet. A ſplendid glaſs chandelier was in the center, and on each ſide was a mutilated pyramid of white marble veined with black; that is to ſay of white cloth, marbled with great art. The chamber appeared to me to want light.

His Majeſty afterward paſſed into the canopy ſaloon, hung with black, and adorned with plates of ſilver from the Berlin palace; and next into the grand hall, hung with black. Eight artificial black columns had been added to this immenſe hall. Its only embelliſhments were garlands

lands of cypreſs, and here again there was too little light.

In about half an hour the King returned to his apartments; and, at half paſt eight, Prince Henry, Prince Ferdinand, and the Duke of Brunſwick, came to ſee the ſame apartments, where they only remained five minutes.

At a quarter paſt nine, the King went to Prince Henry. The regiments of guards formed under their windows. The canopy was brought; it was of black velvet, ſurrounded by cloth of gold, and laced with a crape-fringe. On the cloth of gold were black eagles. Twelve poſts, covered with velvet, ſupported the canopy; and over them were twelve ſilver eagles, each a foot high, which produced a good effect.

After the canopy came the ſtate coach (*y*); very large, very low, hung with white ſattin edged with gold fringe, and drawn by eight horſes covered with black velvet.

(*y*) *Corbillard.* Perhaps the word is here uſed to ſignify a herſe. T.

To the ſtate coach ſucceeded a chariot, in black velvet, on which was a black crown, drawn by eight cream-coloured horſes, in black velvet harneſs, on which were fixed black eagles, embroidered in gold. The livery ſervants, chamber lackeys, heydukes, running footmen, huntſmen, and pages, followed.

The Princeſſes, uſhered by Meſſieurs Goertz, and Biſhopſwerder, were at church.

At ten o'clock the proceſſion began. The place of aſſembly was the grand hall with the eight columns. A gentle deſcent had been made from the grand canopy to the door, to which the ſtate coach was drawn up to receive the coffin. The road from the palace to the church was planked, and covered with black cloth. The proceſſion was truly ſuperb, and conducted with great order. The troops formed two lines.

The church was illuminated with wax-candles, and ſmall lamps; and the coffin was depoſited under a cupola, ſupported by ſix pillars of white marble. The organ began to play and the funeral ſervice was

performed, which continued half an hour. The return was not diſorderly, but it was not made in proceſſion.

When the gueſts came back to the palace, the tables were ready ſpread, and the courſes were ſerved up at noon. The gueſts roſe from table at half paſt one. The King, Prince Henry, the Duke of Brunſwick, and the Princeſſes, went to Sans-Souci. Such was the manner in which the morning was ſpent.

There was no compariſon to be drawn between this and the funerals of the church of Notre Dame, with reſpect to magnificence, taſte, or ſplendor; but they did every thing that could be done, the country and the time conſidered.

There was much order from the commencement to the cloſe. The muſic was indifferent, had no effect, no energy, no charm, and was ill executed: not one good voice, Concialini excepted, who did not ſing well.

The tables were well ſupplied, the viands abundant and ſelect, the ſervants numerous and orderly. Each of the aides-de-camp

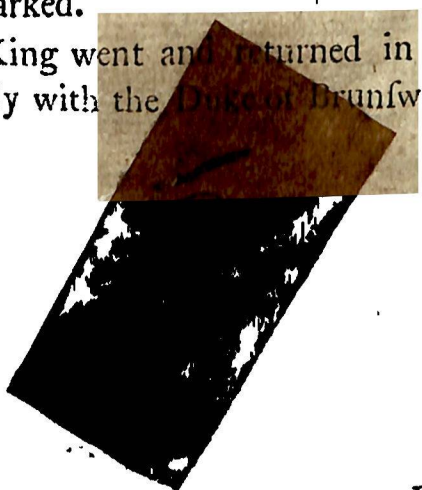
general did the honours of a table. French, Rheniſh, and Hungarian wines were ſerved in profuſion.

The King going to table led Prince Henry. On every occaſion his Majeſty ſaluted with dignity. His countenance was neither ſerious nor too chearful.

He teſtified his ſatisfaction to Reck, who replied Captain Gonthard had regulated the whole; and that he had no other merit except that of having procured him every thing of which he ſtood in need.

The King wore the grand uniform of the guards. The Princes were booted. Prince Goethen had mourning ſpurs, which was remarked.

The King went and returned in company only with the Duke of Brunſwick.



LETTER XXIV.

September 12th, 1786.

THE King departs to-morrow. The order of his journey has undergone no change. He will be back on the twenty-eighth, and again ſet out, on the ſecond, for Sileſia. I ſhall probably have a good opportunity, on his return, to ſpeak of finance, and of ſubſtitutes. Previous to this, Panchaud muſt abſolutely unite with me to form a good plan of ſpeculating in our funds; good for the finances, and in particular good for the King, who is to be allured. Remember the importance of this Monarch.

Biſhopſwerder increaſes in credit, which he carefully conceals. Welner, a ſubaltern creature, endowed with underſtanding, management, and knowledge of interior affairs; a myſtic, when myſticiſm was neceſſary to pleaſe, and cured of his viſions, ſince

ſince the King has required theſe ſhould be kept ſecret; active, induſtrious, and what is more, ſufficiently obſcure to be employed without creating jealouſy; Welner, I ſay, appears to gain prodigious influence. He has the qualities neceſſary to ſucceed, and even to outwit all his competitors (z).

I again repeat, Boden ought not to be neglected, by the way of inſinuation. He is vain, and ſhould be capable of corruption: for, always ſuſpected of the moſt unſatiable avarice and the baſeſt means, he has loſt a place of eight thouſand German crowns, by the death of the Landgrave of Heſſe-Caſſel; and it is ſaid is driven to expedients. He correſponds with the King, and rather intimately; that which he ſhould often repeat muſt produce an effect. He is the hero to ſlay Hertzberg, who I may add has not been ſucceſsful concerning Holland; and in deſpite of whom Thulemeyer may ſtill be recalled.

(z) He is at preſent abſolutely the principal miniſter.

Prince

Prince Henry ſtill feeds on hopes. I have no doubt that he is cajoled by the Duke of Brunſwick. But he is exactly at the ſame point, except that Hertzberg is not ſo powerful. The King intends Alvenſleben for the French embaſſy; a man of high birth, ſenſe, and wiſdom, as it is affirmed. He is at Dreſden. I ſhall endeavour to ſtudy him; and ſhall take him letters.

No perſon is ſatisfied; civil and military, courtiers and miniſters, all pout. I imagine they expected it would rain gold. I have nothing to add to my prognoſtics, which may be reduced to this alternative —The nation ſacrificed, while affairs continue tranquil, that we may perſuade ourſelves we govern—The Duke of Brunſwick, ſhould perſis intervene, and the ſtorm begin to blow.

In the name of buſineſs and of friendſhip, do not forget a plan of operations for finance. Schulemburg is ſupported, and I have reaſons to believe he will not be diſmiſſed. Should I acquire influence in the finance, I would not be his enemy.

He

He will be more ſerviceable than any other, Baron Knyphauſen only excepted, who will never be any thing, while Hertzberg is in power.

Remember that you have an incapable envoy in Bavaria; and that this will become an embaſſy of importance, at the death of the Elector. If it be meant to place me, which muſt be meant if I am to ſerve, had not I beſt make my firſt appearance here?

LETTER XXV.

Dreſden, September 16th, 1786.

I SHALL ſay nothing particular to you yet, of this country, as you may ſuppoſe; for who can run and read? Beſide I find the inconvenience of having no credentials, and conſequently have not been able to ſpeak with propriety on affairs, except in very general and metaphorical terms.

Stuterheim, the miniſter for foreign affairs, with whom I have dined, is ſaid to be a very well, a labyrinth of ſecrecy; and it follows that his ſubalterns are exceedingly reſerved. The miniſters here rather give in their *reports* than act. Give in their *reports* is the conſecrated phraſe. But I have been ſo well convinced, by what I have ſeen under Frederick II, that the King who governs moſt himſelf is ſo little the maſter, and is ſo infinitely deceived, that I am

I am perfectly aware of the degree of credit which theſe court *dicta* deſerve.

I have ſeen Alvenſleben. Should he go to France, I do not think he will live long; he is worn out, and only keeps himſelf alive by extreme abſtinence, and an almoſt total ſequeſtration from ſociety. He is well acquainted with Germany, is ſaid to act with prudence and propriety, is ſucceſsful in what he undertakes, and has a good moral character. He is not however without art, and perhaps he wiſhes to be cunning. He is not preciſely the man for France; but he is a ſpecimen of the fruit of the country; and, for any other uſe, is ſome of the beſt it produces. I imagine you will find him agreeable.

I ſhall endeavour to get into the currency of the country; but I repeat, while I ſhall have no credentials, and am left ſo much in ignorance concerning home affairs, I ſhall be much more proper to collect literary and written opinions than for any other buſineſs; and the thoughts of men are not written in their faces. Nor

do

do you, for example, find in any book that a prime miniſter has confided his eldeſt ſon, on his travels, to ſuch a block-head as G***; or to a Chevalier du V**, who never utters a word that he does not utter an abſurdity, and perhaps ſome that are dangerous. But why has he related that he waited at Hamburg five weeks for permiſſion to take the Viſcount de Vergennes to Berlin, on occaſion of the acceſſion of the King, and that this was refuſed? Is he afraid that they ſhould be inſenſible at Berlin of the affectation of having avoided that court? I ſhould never [illegible] all the incoherencies [illegible] of which is ridiculous in the extreme. * * * * * *

In reality, if I am to commence as a ſubaltern in the diplomatic corps, I ſhall have no objection to Hamburgh; where, excluſive of the great intercourſe of the commerce of the North, with which we are unacquainted, and of which we do not ſufficiently participate, ſince we wiſh to have an envoy there, we ought to have an active perſon, inſtead of one from whom

nothing

nothing is ſo deſirable as that he ſhould be deaf and dumb.

The vaſt connexions there are, between the grand emporiums of trade, are ſuch, that theſe poſts are never things of indifference. Why do not they beſtow a ſinecure on M. du V**?

LETTER XXVI.

Dreſden, September 19th, 1786.

THERE are few *men* here, yet is the machine tolerably well regulated: nothing can better prove that order and conſtancy are more neceſſary, for good government, than great talents.

The extreme credit of Marcolini is to be regarded as a popular rumour. He is a favourite without aſcendency (as without merit) at leaſt in the cabinet; his influence does not extend beyond the court. At preſent he is in Italy, and the routine of affairs is the ſame. Probably ſome favours, which paſs through his hands, and which the exceſſive devotion of the Elector rather beſtows on Catholics than on Lutherans, are the real cauſe of theſe murmurs; which however are ſufficiently believed to occaſion the Emperor to make a ſtupid blunder. He has ſent here one of

the ſilliеſt of ambaſſadors; one Okelly, an Iriſhman; becauſe that Marcolini had married his niece. He thought by this means to have governed every thing; but the trap was ſo palpably groſs that no one has taken the trouble to remove the bait.

The miniſters who have real influence are Stuterheim and Gudſchmidt. The firſt is very infirm, but prudent, ſage, and with underſtanding enough to know on what ſubjects he is ignorant, to aſk information, and to conſult others. He however draws near his end. The ſecond does not ſhew himſelf to the world. He is affirmed to be a man of the greateſt merit; that he has infinite knowledge; that not a ſingle pamphlet in any language throughout Europe eſcapes him; that his judgment is ſound, his underſtanding perſpicuous and penetrating, and his temper communicative; which laſt quality is in him the more compatible with diſcretion, becauſe he poſſeſſes its piety, without its ſuperſtitions. He ranks firſt in the confidence of the Elector; but it muſt be added

added he is ſixty years of age, and has ill health.

Among the miniſters, we muſt alſo enumerate Mr. Worm, a well-informed man, who poſſeſſes ſome principles of political œconomy, with information not very common on the general relations of commerce; together with induſtry, activity, and great quickneſs of apprehenſion; but, as it is ſaid, rarely with much juſtneſs of underſtanding. His moral character is ſuſpected. He is accuſed of not keeping his hands pure from bribery; but it is not the leſs true that he is of great ſervice to internal government. He appeared to me to be artful, communicative, ironical, ſubtle, ſatirical, and crafty; but very proper for buſineſs in all countries (*a*).

Of all the foreign ambaſſadors, I believe Mr. Saftzing from Sweden to be the only one above, or rather not below, mediocrity. I except the Engliſh envoy, who has the character of being an able man,

(*a*) No wonder governments, and conſequently nations, are vicious, when ſuch are ſuppoſed, even by men of conſiderable abilities, to be the proper qualities for governors. T.

but whom I have not yet any proper opportunity of examining. He is open and complaiſant, even to affectation, conſidering that his character is Engliſh. If we except Alvenſleben, not one of the remainder deſerves the honour of being mentioned.

The Elector is a man diſtinct from Princes in general, yet he appears to partake of the character of the King of England. The conſiſtency of his mind, which is entire, has a ſmall alloy of obſtinacy. I ſpoke but little to him, becauſe of the confuſion of the dinner. Etiquette is obſerved at the table of the Elector; conſequently I paid every care and attention to ſeat M. de Vergennes near the Prince. He ſpeaks with intelligence and preciſion, but his voice is harſh, ſtuff, and ſhrill. His dreſs and countenance ſeemed to indicate devout and wheedling, but acute and implacable, jealouſy. The very ill education of the Electreſs, her noiſy mode of ſpeech, and her unreſerved freedom, greatly occupy this Prince to his diſadvantage; for, beſide that ſuch kind of vigilance ever bears

bears ſomewhat of the ſtamp of ridicule, his crabbed figure, rendered more diſagreeable by a paralytic affection in the eyes, becomes at ſuch moments reſtleſs, diſturbed, and hideous.

Such, and ſo ungracious, as he is here depicted, he is a Prince who, from many conſiderations, is worthy eſteem and reſpect. Since the year 1763, his deſire to do good, his œconomy, his indefatigable labours, his innumerable privations, his perſeverance, and his induſtry, have not for a moment relaxed. He has paid all the perſonal debts of the Electors; and is advanced in the liquidation of the debts of the [illegible]. He purſues his plans with inflexible punctuality. Slow, but not irreſolute; difficult in accompliſhing, but intelligent; with few reſources, at a firſt view, but poſſeſſed of aptitude and the gift of meditation, his only weakneſs ariſes from his religion, which yet does not occaſion him to exaggerate his rights, or to neglect his duties. One ſtep further and he would have been a bigot, and one ſtep backward and he would no longer be a

devotee. It is much to be doubted whether his confeſſor, Hertz, has the leaſt influence, except in the diſtribution of ſome footmen's places. The Elector ſupports his miniſters with uncommon firmneſs, againſt all, and to all. In a word, but for him, the country had been undone; and, ſhould he have the good fortune to ſee a duration of peace, he will render it very flouriſhing. Population viſibly increaſes: the annual ſurplus of births over deaths amounts to twenty thouſand; and the number of the people is leſs than two millions. Trade, which might be better, is not bad. The army imitates that of Pruſſia, over which it has the advantage of being purely national; but, to ſay the truth, Saxony is the leaſt military of all the provinces of Germany. Credit is good, and even great. The paper currency is at par, or nearly, and the intereſt of money at four per cent. The cabinet of Dreſden is the only one in Europe which has adopted the true principles of coinage. Agriculture is in a ſtate of paſſable reſpectability. Manufactures are free; the rights

of

of the people are uninfringed; juſtice is impartially adminiſtered; in a word, all things conſidered, it is the moſt happy country in Germany. Yet this is a remarkable circumſtance, and excites admiration, when we recollect the terrible ſcourges (*b*) which have ſucceſſively, and ſometimes collectively, laid this fine, but ill-ſituated country, deſolate.

They are perſuaded here that we inſtigate the Turk; that there is a coolneſs between the two imperial courts; and that Ruſſia is in want of men, money, and horſes. It muſt be frankly owned that her bank operations have a gloomy appearance. It is ſuppoſed we ſhall endeavour, ſhould it be abſolutely neceſſary, to effect a diverſion in Germany; without

(*b*) The principal ſcourges to which the author alludes, by the epithet of ill-ſituated, is war; by which its ſufferings have indeed been dreadful. Charles V, the thirty years war, Charles XII, and ſtill more flagrantly the late Frederick, have been its tormentors. That it ſhould recover, as it continually has recovered, from ſuch periodical, ſuch renovating deſtruction, is a fact remarkable in hiſtory, worthy the attention of the philoſoper, and the higheſt eulogium on the country. T.

interfering, except by coming to the aid of thoſe who ſhould be too much expoſed to danger. For no one imagines we ſhall ſuffer Germany to devolve on one ſingle head, nor even to be divided between two. And, with reſpect to Turkey in Europe, it is thought that our intereſt, conjointly with that of England, will, by one means or other, avert the deſtruction with which it is menaced.

On enquiry, I find the Elector of Bavaria has not properly had an attack. He has only changed his ſervants; and, when he does ſo, he alters his regimen to excite venery. It happens on theſe occaſions that he has nervous affections, which reſemble fall attacks, and which will ſome day bring on a paralytic ſtroke. His life is not depended upon.

The hoſtilities of the ſtadtholder have produced an effect here greatly to his diſadvantage. For my part I do not think his affairs in ſo diſaſtrous a ſtate as they ſeem to be believed. Should we embroil province with province, we ſhall loſe our advantages; it will in vain be urged that the

the Stadtholder is maſter of Guelderland: the nobility is numerous in that province, and they form *a public* opinion.

I ſend you the ſtate of the military in the electorate of Saxony, which is no ſecret; but I ſhall alſo add, by the next courier, that of the public ſtores, which I procured by a ſingular accident, the particulars of which it would be uſeleſs here to relate. I ſhall only remark that the cuſtom which the Elector has for ſeveral years adopted, in his offices, of employing ſupernumeraries without ſalaries, might give place to diſcovery, however well ſecrets may here be kept.

I ſhall commit to M. de V**, who is returning to Paris, all the minutes of my cyphers, well and duly ſealed, and addreſſed to you. * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * *

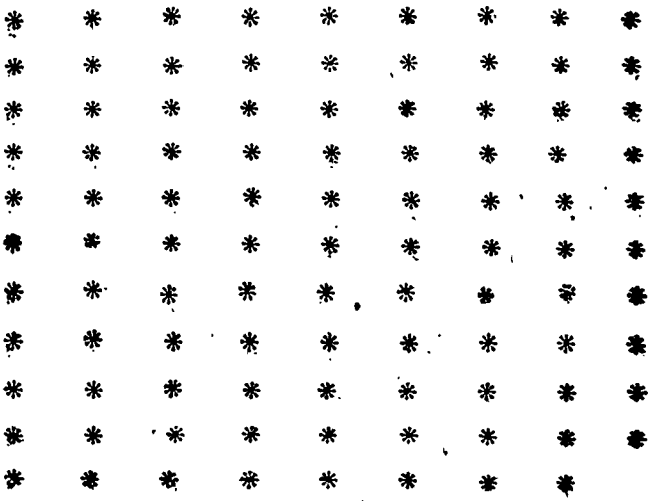
* * * * * * * * *

He does not expect to return hither, and has hopes of the Swediſh embaſſy.

May not the changes which will take place in the corps diplomatique, by the vacancy of M. d'Adhémard, afford an opportunity

portunity of giving me ſomething more agreeable and leſs precarious than a ſecret commiſſion, which muſt end of courſe with the life of a miniſter, who is haſtening toward the grave? I hope your friendſhip will not ſlumber. You muſt own others might act with leſs diligence. If you will take the trouble again to read my diſpatches as they are here ſent, not in cyphers but correct, and will at the ſame time conſider all the difficulties of various kinds that I have had to ſurmount, and the few means which my cloudy ſituation can afford, you will not be diſſatisfied with my correſpondence. Since, for example, Zelle has publiſhed the hiſtory of the King's diſeaſe, I have the ſatisfaction to perceive the information I ſent you was exact. True it is that, under the late King, at the concluſion of ſo long a reign, a man knew to whom to addreſs himſelf; whereas at preſent it is neceſſary to diſcover which are the doors at which you muſt knock. Yet I think I have given a paſſable picture of men and things. And what

what could I not effect of this kind, what could I not diſcover, had I credentials? *



LETTER XXVII.

Dreſden, September 21ſt, 1786.

I HAVE ſeveral times mentioned, and particularly in Numbers XI and XIX, this Boden; I can only refer you to the circumſtances you will there find.

As to the perſon named Dufour, whoſe real name is Chauvier, and who was a journeyman barber in France, had I thought it of any importance, I ſhould have ſpoken before, and given his character at full; for he is one of the circuitous paths pointed out to me by Prince Henry. He certainly had influence over the Heir Apparent, which he obtained——

1. Becauſe he was perſecuted by the late King, by whom he had been expelled (*c*); ſo that, in order to return, he was obliged to take the name of Dufour,

(*c*) The author does not ſay whether from the court or from the country. T.

which

which is that of a family of the French coloniſts. And——

2. That he might aid to baniſh the ſpleen. He often dined in private with the Prince, who was ſo familiar with him, ſome time before his acceſſion, that when wearied with his diſcourſe he would drily bid him hold his tongue (*d*). Dufour was one of thoſe with whom I ſhould have made myſelf intimate, had the King continued to live ſome time longer; and he was among the perſons and things that occaſioned me to project a journey to Potſdam. But death ſuddenly interpoſed, and I ſhould have ſought his intimacy too abruptly. Not to mention that ſubaltern influence has, on the King's acceſſion, totally diſappeared.

The perſon named Chapuis is a man who is not deficient in underſtanding and addreſs. He was born in French Switzer-

(*d*) It is not very clear, from the original, whether it was the Prince who bade Dufour, or Dufour who bade the Prince, hold his tongue. The word *préſomtif* we believe can only be applied to an Heir Apparent, or we ſhould have reverſed the reading. T.

land. He is the governor of the natural ſon of the King, and the well-beloved of Madame Rietz. Thinking his acquaintance might be valuable in many reſpects; I conſequently ſought it, under the pretence of literature only; but at preſent Chapuis has not in himſelf any one point of contact. To run after ſuch people, ſo circumſtanced, would but be to render myſelf ſuſpicious to no purpoſe. I mentioned to you, on my return from Rheinſberg, Number XI,—"I have numerous "modes of communication, which will "develop themſelves as time and oppor-"tunity ſhall ſerve."—But theſe have been retarded by the acceſſion. Applications of this ſecret kind can only be made in the depth of winter, and during the carnival, with utility and ſafety.

Theſe, generally, are rather tools proper for a ſpy to work with than the engines of influence. Should ſuch people ever have power over foreign politics, the puiſſance of Pruſſia muſt draw to a concluſion. This country muſt not be eſtimated by France; there is not here the ſame margin in which

to

to inſert follies, or to correct. And as in general man remains at that point where it is neceſſary he ſhould be fixed, the King of Pruſſia will act with circumſpection in what relates to foreign affairs.

Not that this ſhould prevent us from recollecting that we ought to guard with extreme caution againſt a coalition between Pruſſia and Auſtria; for this ſyſtem alſo is capable of defence. It is even the eaſieſt of execution, and the moſt ſplendid; nor would Prince Henry be ſo averſe to it as he himſelf ſuppoſes, ſhould he perceive the leaſt glimmering of hope. Hitherto indeed, I have not noticed any thing that could give ſuſpicion; but I ſhall more carefully examine whatever might occaſion ſuch an event on my return to Berlin. There can be little danger that I ſhould become languid in the purſuit of this object, having four years ago publiſhed my fears of ſuch an event, and having begun to ſend my ſtatic tables of Auſtria, only that you might attentively conſider the immenſe baſis of power which the Emperor poſſeſſes, and whoſe alliance with

France I cannot but conſider as the maſterpiece of Prince Kaunitz, and the type of our indelible levity.

It may be that this power of the Emperor is as much overrated elſewhere as it is the reverſe in France; but even this is a reaſon which may lead to prefer, inſtead of the perilous honour of being the champion of the Germanic liberties, the eaſy and deceptive advantage of dividing the ſpoils. Therefore delay appears to me more unſeaſonable than it has been: for it is probable that the King of Pruſſia, having once pledged himſelf, will not recede; which ſeems to be warranted by his perſonal probity, his hatred of the Emperor, the antipathy that exiſts between the two nations, and the univerſal opinion, which prevails, that the chief of the empire is a perfidious Prince.

Your project concerning Brunſwick is certainly excellent, and I ſhall ſpare no labour that may tend to give it ſucceſs. But the man is very circumſpect, Hertzberg very vehement, and the criſis equally urgent.

I have

I have converſed with ſeveral of the Engliſh who are returned from the Emperor's reviews: he behaved there with great affability, and was very talkative. He particularly diſtinguiſhed a French officer, who had travelled on horſeback, that not a ſingle military poſition might eſcape him, on his route. The Auſtrian troops in general manœuvre well, by companies; and even tolerably by regiments; but collectively, their inferiority to the Pruſſian army is prodigious. Opinions on this point are unanimous. They were not capable of keeping their diſtances, even when filing off in the preſence of the Emperor. This grand pivot, on which tactics turn, is unknown to the Auſtrians. Whereas the Pruſſians ſo habitually, ſo religiouſly, obſerve their diſtances, that any failure of this kind is an error unheard of.

The inferiority of the Auſtrian army, compared to the Pruſſian, is attributed,

1. To the want of a ſufficient number of officers, and ſubalterns, compared to the number of ſoldiers.

2. To the œconomy, totally anti-military, of the Emperor; who, while the companies nominally conſiſt of two hundred men, does not maintain more than fifty or ſixty under arms, and ſends the others home, even againſt their will; ſo that three-fourths of the ſoldiers are never diſciplined.

3. To the troops being diſperſed, kept in petty detachments, and never exerciſed as a whole; except when they are encamped, where even then they are diſciplined by detail.

4. To the very great inferiority of the officers. The corps of captains forms the ſoul of the Pruſſian army, and at the ſame time is the diſgrace of the Auſtrian, &c. &c.

It is generally affirmed that, ſhould the two nations go to war, there is little doubt concerning which would have the advantage; for that there is no equality between them, even ſuppoſing their generals to be equal; and that the conteſt moſt certainly would be favourable to the Pruſſians, during the firſt campaign. But this equality

equality of generals is not true. Laudon, though ſtill vigorous, cannot wear much longer; beſide that he has often ſaid he never would command an army, unleſs at the diſtance of four hundred miles from the Emperor. The abilities of Lacy are ſuſpected, though he enjoys the entire confidence of Joſeph II; and, as it is rumoured, has rendered himſelf ſingularly neceſſary, by the complication of the military machine. No commander in the Auſtrian army can contend againſt the Duke of Brunſwick, nor even againſt Kalcreuth, or Moellendorf.

Perſons who have come very lately from Ruſſia affirm that the Empreſs is in good health; and that *Zimenow* has obliterated her long ſorrow for the death of *Lanſkoi*. It is alſo ſaid that Bellborotko gains ground upon Potemkin; but of this I more than doubt.

I have no belief in the facility with which the fifth diſpatch may be decyphered; I think that in general the cyphers have rather been conjectured than divined. The way by which they are

commonly known is the official communication of writings, which is made from one court to another, and which the miniſter has ſometimes the ill addreſs to ſend without his accuſtomed cypher, on a known day. This is a quickſand of which I am not in danger. It is neceſſary however to have a variety of cyphers, and I intreat you will not neglect any occaſion of ſending me ſome that are new and more compleat.

LETTER XXVIII.

Dreſden, September 24th, 1786.

YOUR letter, of the fourth of September, which by miſtake your ſecretaries have dated the fourth of Auguſt, came to hand very late, and I ſhall reply without written references, and ſolely from memory, in the annexed ſheet, to the principal points. I had indeed previouſly anſwered them; nor do I believe any thing has eſcaped me, that it was in my power to learn, or that I have any reaſon to repent of having ſacrificed too much to reſpect and to probabilities, at the time of the death of the King. Had I purſued my plan, I ſhould have been four days ſooner than any of the diplomatic couriers; but I requeſt you will anſwer me whether it was poſſible to divine the conduct of our embaſſy. I diſregarded the minute circumſtances of death, as I had done that of the news itſelf; nor could I divine that

theſe, being no longer ſecret, and having become ſo eaſy to examine and deſcribe, ſhould yet have remained ſecrets to you. I ſuſpected it the leſs becauſe that certain ambaſſadors (indeed moſt of them) appeared to me ſo embarraſſed, by the compleating of their diſpatches, that I ſhould not have imagined they would have diſdained a ſupply, which was to be obtained with ſo much facility. Satisfied alſo with having informed you, thanks to lucky circumſtances, of the progreſs of the diſeaſe, in ſuch a manner as few miniſters were informed, I deſpiſed thoſe particulars that were become public. But there were ſome that were ſufficiently intereſting, relative to the two laſt days of the King, from which a banquet might be prepared at an eaſy expence; and the poignancy of which not death itſelf could deſtroy; relating as they did to a mortal ſo extraordinary, both in body and mind.

His diſeaſe, which would have killed ten men, was of eleven months continuance, without interruption, and almoſt without relaxation, after his firſt fit, of an aſphyxic

aſphyxic apoplexy, from which he was recovered by emetics, and after which the firſt word he uttered, with an imperious geſture, was SILENCE. Nature made four different efforts to ſave this her rare compoſition; twice by diarrhœas, and twice again by cuticular eruptions. Hence it might be ſaid, by the worſhippers of a God, that this his image was broken by the Creator himſelf; and that nature did not abandon one of the moſt beauteous of her works, till the total deſtruction of the organs, exhauſted by age, had been effected; nor till after a continual warfare between body and mind (*e*) during forty-ſix years; till after fatigues and agitations of every kind which ſignaliſed this fairy reign, and after the moſt ruinous diſeaſe.

This man died on the ſeventeenth of Auguſt, at twenty minutes paſt two in the morning; and on the fifteenth, when contrary to his conſtant cuſtom he ſlept till

(*e*) The French reads—" contention continuelle " *d'ame* et *d'eſprit*;" or of *ſoul* and *mind*: the tranſlator has the misfortune not to underſtand the diſtinction. T.

eleven o'clock, he tranſacted his cabinet buſineſs, though his feebleneſs was exceſſive, without any want of attention; and even with a conciſeneſs ſcarcely perhaps to be found in any other prince in good health. Thus when, on the ſixteenth, the reigning Monarch ſent orders to Zelle to repair inſtantaneouſly to Potſdam, becauſe the King had remained inſenſible almoſt ſince the noon of the day before, and becauſe he was in a lethargic ſleep, the phyſician, arriving at three o'clock, and finding Frederick II. with animation in his eyes, ſenſibility in his organs, and ſo much recollection, not being called, durſt not make his appearance. Zelle judged he was paſt recovery leſs from the cadaverous odour which exhaled from his wound than becauſe he, for the firſt time during the whole courſe of his reign, did not recollect that he had not expedited the affairs of the cabinet. The concluſion was ſagely drawn; dying only could he forget his duty * * * * * * *. Two thirds of Berlin at preſent are violently declaiming, in order to prove that Frederick

rick II. was a man of common, and almoſt of mean capacity. Ah! could his large eyes, which obedient to his wiſhes ſeduced or terrified the human heart, could they but for a moment open, where would theſe ideot paraſites find courage ſufficient to expire with ſhame?

LETTER XXIX.

Dreſden, September 26th, 1786.

CONVERSING with a well-informed man who is returned from Ruſſia, I learnt a fact totally ſtrange to me, though no doubt known to the Count de Vergennes; but, whether or no, one which appeared to me proper to make you acquainted with; and more eſpecially becauſe the project is purſued with greater ardor than ever.

When Hyder Ali, having advanced beyond the Orixa, was at the heighth of his proſperous ſucceſs, the inhabitants of the north of Bengal, interrupted in their cuſtomary commerce by the conflict between the Engliſh and their enemies, brought their iron as far as the frontiers of Siberia, there to find a market. This extraordinary fact was the cauſe of a remarkable attempt made by Ruſſia, in 1783. She ſent a fleet to Aſtracan, to ſeize on Aſtrabat,

bat, there to form an eſtabliſhment, on the northern coaſt of the Caſpian ſea, and thence to penetrate into the interior parts of India. The enterpriſe failed; but is ſo far from being abandoned that, at this very moment, a plan may be ſeen in relief, at Peterſburg, of the works by which it is intended to fortify Aſtrabat.

Of all the gigantic projects of Ruſſia, this is perhaps the leaſt unreaſonable; ſince it is pointed out by the nature of things, and ſince there is already an inland navigation completely carried on from Aſtracan, on the Volga, the Mita, the Lake Jemen, the Wologda, the Canal of Ladoga, and the Neva, to Peterſburg. Should this plan ever be purſued with activity and ſucceſs, it muſt either happen that England will ſeriouſly think of an alliance with us, againſt the ſyſtem of the North, or ſhe muſt ſuffer every ſort of advantage to be obtained over her at Peterſburg: for the intereſt of the Ruſſians muſt then become totally oppoſite to thoſe of the Engliſh; and hence may ariſe dreadful

ful hurricanes, that may ſweep away their puiſſance in the eaſt.

How many revolutions, how much ſtrife, between men and things, ſhall be occaſioned by the development of the deſtiny of that empire, which ſucceſſively overawes and enſlaves all ſurrounding nations? It muſt indeed be owned that her influence, in each place, ought to decreaſe in an inverſe proportion to the multiplicity of theſe places. But how great is the influence of theſe augmenting points of contact, relative to Europe! And, without prematurely divining the fate of Turkey in Europe, with an intent to overcharge the picture, ſhould Ruſſia ſeize on the Poliſh Ukraine, as the manner in which ſhe is arming on the Black Sea, and diſpoſing of her commerce, ſeem to indicate and to threaten, how much greater ſhall they ſtill be? What ſpecies of underſtanding muſt the Emperor poſſeſs, if it be impoſſible to make him perceive that the Turks and the Poles are leſs dangerous neighbours than thoſe ſtrange people; who are ſuſceptible of all, capable of all, who

who become the beſt ſoldiers in the world, and who, of all the men that inhabit the globe, are the moſt malleable?

The various ideas I have acquired here, where I have made a tolerable harveſt, will be comprized in a particular memorial. They are not immediately neceſſary, and are too numerous to be inſerted in my diſpatches. But there was one temptation, which was rather expenſive, that I could not reſiſt. The Elector has employed his engineers in the topography of Saxony. Twenty-four maps have already been laid down: they are kept in great ſecrecy, and yet, by paying ſome Louis for each map, I can have them copied. True it is I recollected that, ſince I *could*, M. de V*** perhaps *has*—But, as we rarely do all we may, or even all we ought to do, it is exceedingly poſſible this ſhould not be ſo; and then I ſhould have loſt an opportunity that never more could be recovered. This reflection determined me, in the hope that the intent of the act would be its apology; and, as I have not put government to the leaſt fruitleſs expence, or

which

which did not appertain to the better execution of the office I have undertaken, my ſurplus accounts I ſuppoſe will be paſſed * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * *

The Elector of Bavaria is not ill. His new miſtreſs ſeems only to have been the whim of a day, and his favour again reverts to his former, Madam von Torring Seefeld, originally Minuzzi.

LETTER XXX.

Dreſden (f), September 30th, 1786.

YOU have been informed no doubt, by the courier of Tueſday, of what happened on Monday, at the firſt court held by the Queen; but, as I think it is proper I ſhould add ſome reflexions on this ſubject, I ſhall begin by relating what paſſed.

The Princeſs Frederica of Pruſſia, who imagined that, according to the very ſenſible cuſtom of the country, the Queen would ſit down to play with natives, and not with foreign ambaſſadors, had placed the Count d'Eſt** at her table; for it was he who arranged the parties. She aſked the Queen whom ſhe appointed for her own table. The Queen named Prince Reuſs, the Auſtrian ambaſſador, and the Prince of Goethe; but, this ſpecies of in-

(*f*) The ſcene of this and the two following letters, though dated at Dreſden, is Berlin. T.

ſantine elephant having, after ſome conſideration, declared that he did not know any one game, the Queen ſubſtituted Romanzow, the Ruſſian ambaſſador. The Princeſs Frederica was exceedingly ſurpriſed, but either dared not or would not make any remonſtrances; and, the Queen's party ſitting down to play, the Count d'Eſt**, with great poſitiveneſs, energy, and emphaſis, refuſed to ſit down at the table of the Princeſs; declaring he certainly would not play. He immediately withdrew.

Every body blames the Queen and the Count. The firſt for having committed an unexampled blunder, and the ſecond, ſay the people of Berlin, ought not to have refuſed the daughter of the King. Perhaps this judgment is ſevere; though I own I ſhould not myſelf have refuſed; becauſe, in my opinion, we ſhould not ſhew we are inſulted, except when we wiſh to be ſuppoſed inſulted. And, as I think, it would have been very thoughtleſs to have taken ſerious notice of the abſurd miſtake of a Princeſs, who is the moſt aukward

of

of all the Princeſſes in Europe. Neither had Count d'Eſt**, rigorouſly ſpeaking, any greater cauſe of complaint than any other of the royal ambaſſadors, among whom there is no claim of precedency. Perhaps too it would be imprudent to endeavour to eſtabliſh any ſuch claim; for this would be very certainly to call that in queſtion which tradition and univerſal tolerance have granted to us. And here let me obſerve that, as ſoon as Lord Dalrymple knew Count d'Eſt** had been to complain to Count Finckenſtein, he declared he made no demand of precedency whatever; but neither would he ſuffer precedency from any one. I ſhould therefore have accepted the party of the Princeſs; but ſhould have ſaid aloud, and pointing to the table of the Queen—"I ſee we are "all here without diſtinction of perſons; "and certainly fortune could not have "been more favourable to me." (The Princeſs may really be called handſome.) Had I thought I ſtill owed more to my ſovereign, I ſhould, on the next court-day, have refuſed the nomination of the Queen;

though it muſt have been a violent and hazardous ſtep, and reparation muſt have become a public topic; inſtead of which it is the inſult only that is talked of, and that conſiderably, in the world.

Will the Count d'Eſt**, or will he not, at preſent, accept the firſt invitation he ſhall receive? Should he comply, it will remain on record that, having reſented the procedure, he has acknowledged himſelf ſecond. Yet how may he refuſe? I have propoſed to Prince Henry, who is the *mezzo termine*, that there ſhould be a court held by the Queen Dowager, who from her circumſpection and native dignity is more reſpected than the reigning Queen; and that Count d'Eſt** ſhould be of her party, with the Emperor's ambaſſador; which diſtinction would be the more marked becauſe that this Queen never yet played with foreign miniſters. If her mourning for her huſband does not counteract this project, it ſeems to me the beſt under the preſent circumſtances. The Queen has written a letter to Count Finckenſtein, which muſt have been read

to

to Count d'Eſt**, in which is inſerted the word *excuſe*, and wherein ſhe requires the King ſhould not be informed of the affair. But it is anſwered the offence was public, and excuſes are wiſhed to be kept ſecret, ſince ſilence is required.

The moſt important and inconteſtably certain fact is, that there was no premeditation in the matter; that it was the ſilly giddineſs of the Queen in which it originated; that Count Finckenſtein, and the whole court, are vexed at the affair; that ſhould the King hear of it he will be very much offended with the Queen, whom he has not ſeen for theſe ſix weeks, and whom he thwarts on all occaſions; that he has reverſed all the arrangements which in the rapture of acceſſion ſhe had made with the maſter of the houſhold; and that in fine never had Queen of Pruſſia, that is to ſay the moſt inſignificant of Queens, leſs influence.

If therefore it be true, on the one part, that the place of every man in this world is that which he himſelf ſhall aſſign to himſelf, that our rank, already much on

the decline in the public opinion, has no need to ſink lower; and that Ruſſian inſolence, which takes indefatigable ſtrides, has need of being watched and traverſed; it is perfectly certain on the other, alſo, that the proceeding of Monday was diſtinct and unmeaning, which ought not to be regarded with a lowering brow, under circumſtances which may lead from lowering to cold diſtance, and from the latter to great changes; or at leaſt to deciſively falſe ſteps, to which the courts of Vienna and London are deſirous of giving birth, and by which they will not fail to profit.

Such is my advice, ſince I have had the honour to have this advice aſked. Permit me to add that Berlin is not any longer an indifferent embaſſy, but that it is neceſſary there to be active, yet cautious; amiable, yet dignified; firm, yet pliant; faithful, yet ſubtle; in a word, to unite qualities which do not often meet. M. de V** means to aſk this embaſſy, ſhould Count d'Eſt** retire, or be ſent elſewhere. I ſpeak unintereſtedly, ſince I have no reaſon to preſume that, ſhould it be determined

to ſend me on any embaſſy, I ſhould begin by one of ſo much conſequence; but it is my duty to ſay that M. de V***, and particularly his lady, are not the proper perſons. His underſtanding is heavy and confined; rather turbulent than active; and timid than prudent. He is more the giver of dinners than the repreſentative of monarchy; he has neither manners, elocution, nor eyes. Madame de V***, who does not want underſtanding, would be too gay even for Paris; and to ſpeak plainly ſhe has little propriety, and leſs decency. But as ſhe is enterpriſing, ſhe makes pretenſions to dignity with all the behaviour of thoughtleſſneſs; and, as ſhe moulds her huſband as ſhe pleaſes, by ſuffering him to believe he is abſolute maſter, ſhe renders him moroſe, uncivil, and rude. Beſide which, ſhe ſequeſters him from the world: and ſuch ſequeſtration muſt every where, and particularly at Berlin, be totally diſadvantageous to an ambaſſador of France. This is one of the errors of Count d'Eſt**.

The following is the chief intelligence I hear, concerning the King and his adminiſtration, relative either to his abſence or his return. He is exceedingly diſſatisfied with the Stadtholder. It is affirmed you ought to accept the declaration of Count Goertz. I repeat inceſſantly that this is the very time when our intentions ought no longer to be ſuſpected; ſince aſſuredly, if we wiſh the deſtruction of the Stadtholderſhip, the Prince of Orange has given us a fine opportunity. Prince Henry affirms that, provided he was reſtored to the right of maintaining order, and not of giving order, at the Hague, and was in poſſeſſion of a little money, the King would be contented. I believe he, the King, feels the neceſſity of not making a falſe ſtep at the beginning of his political career. One fact I can aſſure you is certain, which is that it was the advice of Hertzberg to march ten thouſand men into Holland; and that there was on this occaſion a very warm contention, between him and General Moellendorf, in the King's preſence. By this you may judge

of

of what is to be expected from the violence of ſuch a miniſter. Still however this has not prevented him from being created a Count, in Pruſſia; and, if I am not miſtaken, his influence continues.

With reſpect to domeſtic affairs, whatever Prince Henry may ſay to the contrary, the credit of Schulemburg is on the decline; were it only that he no longer appears in the tranſaction of public buſineſs. It is however affirmed that he, with many others, is ſoon to be made a Count, for they are not œconomiſts of their titles. The commiſſion for the regulation of the cuſtoms begins to ſtrike bold ſtrokes; but they alight on individuals, and are not aimed at general reformation. Launay has received information that the King henceforth can only give him ſix thouſand crowns per annum; in lieu of twenty thouſand, the ſum he before had; and that he muſt accept this or reſign. Launay, enraged, and the more ſo becauſe that he has long ſince demanded his diſmiſſion, loudly declares he will print an eſtimate (*g*),

(*g*) *Compte rendu.*

which will prove not only that, in juſtification of each of his acts, he has a letter from the late King, the fiſcal temper of whom he has moderated much oftener than he has provoked, but that he likewiſe has refuſed twenty bargains, offered him by Frederick II, which would have acquired him tons of gold. The ſcandal of this eſtimate, ſhould he dare to publiſh it, will be very great; and the analyſing of it will rather be a commiſſion of enquiry into the conduct of the late King than of the preſent ſtate of the cuſtoms, which might eaſily have been foreſeen were thus regulated. The commiſſioners have diſmiſſed Roux, the only able man among the collectors, with a penſion of five hundred crowns; and Groddard, a perſon of inſignificance, with a like ſum. They have beſtowed their places on Koepke and Beyer, with a ſalary of three thouſand crowns, neither of whom know any thing; with this difference that the laſt is exact, aſſiduous, and laborious; but both of them are without information, and devoid of principles. Generally ſpeaking, the commiſſioners themſelves

ſelves have none; nor have they the leaſt knowledge of how they ought to act. Commiſſions here will all be the ſame; for, excluſive of the inconveniencies that are annexed to them in every country, there is in this the additional one that men of knowledge are very ſcarce, and they muſt therefore long continue ill ſorted. But the King wiſhes to ſatisfy ſome, beſtow places on thoſe who have protectors, and particularly not to have any prime miniſter. There muſt be an embargo on buſineſs while it remains in this ſtate; and I have many reaſons for ſuppoſing that no perſon will, for ſome months to come, have found his true place, or that which he is deſtined to keep: we muſt not therefore be in haſte to judge.

But we may affirm that the King has exceedingly diſpleaſed the people; leſs in refuſing to partake of the feſtival prepared for his return than in avoiding the ſtreet where the citizens had aſſembled to ſee him paſs.—"He treats us as his uncle "did, on his return from the ſeven years "war," ſay the mob; "but, before imi-

"tating

"tating him in this, he ought to have "imitated the great actions of his uncle." —It muſt be owned good-ſenſe is ſometimes on the ſide of the multitude.

With reſpect to the domeſtic affairs of the palace, any one may remark at the firſt glance that they are totally in diſorder. No maſter; no one to give directions; no funds aſſigned; footmen and the houſhold officers govern all. Dufour, or Chauvier (I before explained to you that this was one and the ſame perſon) like all the other ſubordinate confidants, without any influence whatever, is rather ill than well treated. Colonel Vartenſleben, formerly baniſhed into Pruſſia becauſe of his intimacy with the hereditary Prince, is ſuppoſed to increaſe in favour. But the two men to be obſerved are, Welner, to whom it is affirmed are communicated all miniſterial papers, the reports on all projects, and the reviſal of all deciſions; and Biſhopſwerder, who, beſide univerſal ſuſpicion, talks with too much affectation, of having no influence over the King, not to betray himſelf, in a country where peo-

ple

ple are not artful enough to ſay they do not poſſeſs a thing which they really do not poſſeſs, in order that it may be ſuppoſed they do.

With reſpect to pleaſures they are improved upon. One very remarkable arrangement is that a cook has been appointed for the Princeſs Frederica of Pruſſia, the King's daughter by his firſt Queen; thus ſhe is to have a kind of houſhold; which, if I am not miſtaken is nothing more than a mode, and none of the moſt moral, of procuring frequent and decent interviews with Mademoiſelle Voſs, who is capitulating; for ſhe has declared that no hopes of ſucceſs muſt be entertained, as long as Madam Rietz ſhall continue to be viſited. The latter went to meet the King on his return; then, paſſing through the city with an arrow's ſpeed, ſhe flew to Charlottenburg, whither the King came, and where ſhe lives. She acts the prudent part of taking charge herſelf of the pleaſures of his Majeſty; who apparently ſets a great price on any new enjoyment, be it of what kind it may.

It

It is ſecretly rumoured, though I cannot warrant its truth, that England is prodigal in careſſes, and reiterated offers of a treaty of commerce, on the moſt advantageous terms; and that Ruſſia itſelf ſpares no advances. Certain it is that our enemies and their partizans loudly proclaim that we have lately diſbanded ten thouſand men; which is ſufficient proof, ſay they, that we have no thoughts of holding the two imperial courts in awe.

I can alſo certify that the Grand-Duke and the Grand-Dutcheſs, who long had afforded no ſigns of exiſtence to Prince Henry, have lately written him very charming letters; but theſe are no impediments to the licentious diſcourſe of Romanzow, who on the eve of the King's funeral, aſked, in a public company, whether there would not be rejoicings on the morrow; and who has beſtowed the epithet of the illumination of the five candles on the night of the ſecond, on which homage was paid to the new King, and when a general illumination was ordered. Apropos of homage; Prince Henry is permitted

mitted to make written oath, and this favour has not a little redoubled his fumes; he ſtill wagers that Hertzberg will be diſgraced. This Hertzberg yeſterday read a pompous account to the academy of his journey into Pruſſia, and he was ſuffocated with incenſe by all the candidates. Nothing could be more completely ſilly.

I ſhall conclude with a word concerning Saxony. I do not believe the health of the Elector to be good; he withers viſibly; and this is promoted by the violent exerciſe which he takes from ſyſtem, and in which he perſeveres with all his invincible obſtinacy. He will leave no ſons, and there is no imagining the hypocritic imbecility of his brothers, who are not married; the reſult of which is that this fine country is dangerouſly menaced, by future contingencies. Marcolini, as I have ſaid, is on his journey through Italy; and it is ſuppoſed that one of his commiſſions is to ſeek a wife for Prince Anthony. Prince Henry, who fears leſt choice ſhould be made of a Tuſcan Princeſs, or ſome other of the Auſtrian alliances, has con-

conceived the project of beſtowing the hand of the Princeſs of Condè on him, by which we ſhould ſecure the Electorate and the Elector: I give this as I received it.

Firſt P. S. Let me add that, with reſpect to the map I determined to have ſecretly copied, it is the map of the moſt important part of Saxony; and one which all the foreign ambaſſadors, without exception, with M. de V** at their head, are convinced the Elector will not permit his brother to ſee. I have had a windfall much more valuable: that of the land-ſurvey of 1783, made with great exactitude, and containing a circumſtantial diviſion of territorial wealth. I ſhall have it copied in haſte, for which I do not imagine I ſhall be blamed. M. de V*** is quitting Dreſden, whither he does not wiſh to return. It is a pleaſant poſt, and a very excellent one from which to obſerve the Emperor and the King of Pruſſia.

Boden is on the road hither; he is imagined to be preſumptuous enough to ſolicit the French embaſſy. Either he will be diſ-

diſappointed or the court of Berlin will act improperly. The King ſtill continues in the intention of ſending you Alvenſleben. I ſpoke to you of him when at Dreſden, where I converſed much with him; he is certainly a man of information and underſtanding. Mr. d'Entragues was intimately acquainted with him, and this friendſhip has continued. It would be very eaſy to ſend for M. d'Entragues, who is at Montpellier; whether it were to conduct or to watch his entrance on the ſcene of action.

Second P. S. Prince Henry was ſent for by the King this morning, on buſineſs, and invited to go and dine at Charlottenburg. This he has acquainted me with, and deſired me to come to him at five o'clock. I can add nothing to this enormous length of cyphering, except that I wiſh to repeat that the intelligence of the ten thouſand men propoſed by Hertzberg is fact. It has appeared ſo important to me, when combined with the affairs of Hattem and Elburg, which

ſeemed to give invincible demonſtration that Count Hertzberg had long promiſed, in the ſecret correſpondence of which I have ſpoken, the aid of the army of the new King. I ſay this information appeared ſo important that I thought it my duty to make it known to the Count d'Eſt**, by a channel which he cannot ſuſpect is derived from me.

With reſpect to court intrigues here, I have proof that Prince Henry tells every thing to Prince Ferdinand, who tells every thing to his wife, who, lured by the tempting bribes ſhe receives in ready money, betrays Prince Henry. Luckily the exceſſive ſtupidity of this Princeſs deadens her influence, and congeals the good-will which the King wiſhes to entertain for her.

LETTER XXXI.

Dreſden, October 3d, 1786.

I HAVE had very little time for the courier of to-day, having ſpent all day yeſterday, from ſix o'clock in the morning till night, at, and in the affairs of, the court. The ceremony of rendering homage was awful, notwithſtanding the narrowneſs of the place in which the ſtates were received. As moral ideas have a great influence, even unperceived by us, on our phyſical ſenſations, this tribute of reſpect, paid by armed deſpotiſm to the nation it governs, this ſpecies of paternal colloquy between the Monarch and the deputies, here called the ſtates, eſtabliſhing in ſome manner a correlative engagement, to which only a little more dignity on the part of the deputies, and at leaſt the appearance of deliberation are wanting to give pleaſure to the heart, fill the mind

with ſublime and affecting reveries. To a Prince capable of reflection, I would only wiſh this ceremony to be contraſted with the military oath, and the different emotions they excite to be analized, in order to lead him to examine whether it be true that a monarchy depends wholly upon force, and whether the pyramid ought to reſt upon it baſis or upon its point.

After the diſcourſe of the miniſter of juſtice (Reek) to the ſtates, after the harangue of the firſt order (the eccleſiaſtics), conducted by Prince Frederick of Brunſwick, provoſt of the chapter of Brandenburgh, and after the oath of the nobility, the declaration and confirmation of privileges, the enumeration of titles to be beſtowed, made by the miniſter Hertzberg (the miniſter Schulemburg is one among the number of new Counts) the King advanced, on a projecting balcony over which a very fine canopy had been raiſed, to receive the oaths and the homage of the people. The citizens were aſſembled by companies, wards, and trades, in the ſquare oppoſite the palace. The ſymp-

toms of tumultuous joy are here, as elſe-where, the effects of ſympathy (I had al-moſt ſaid contagious) between a grea tmul-titude of men, aſſembled to behold one elevated ſuperior to them all, whom they call their Monarch and their Maſter, and on whom, in reality, depends the greateſt part of the bleſſings or the woes that await them.

It muſt however be remarked that the order was much greater all the day, and at night, than could have been hoped in any other large metropolis. It is true that they diſtribute here neither wine, cerve-lats (*b*), nor money. The largeſſes are diſtributed to each quarter, and paſs through the hands of the paſtor and the magiſtrate. It is equally true that the paſſions of this are ſcarcely ſo ſtrong as the emotions of other nations.

The King dined upwards of ſix hundred people. All who were noble were invited. When the propoſal was made to me to remain, I replied that, apparently, only the

(*b*) A ſpecies of large ſauſage. T.

national nobility was meant; and that, had it been intended to admit foreigners to that favour, they no doubt would have had the honour of receiving ſuch an intimation. All the Engliſh, and almoſt all the French, like me, and with me, retired.

The illuminations were not very great. One was remarked where all the ſmall lamps were covered over by crape, ſo that the light appeared dim, gloomy, and truly funereal. This was the invention of a Jew, and it was in the front of his own houſe that it took place. It calls to my mind a beautiful paſſage in the ſermon which preceded the ceremony, and which was preached in the Lutheran church. The miniſter of the prevailing religion long invoked, and with conſiderable pathos and energy; the bleſſings of toleration— "That happy and holy harveſt, for which "the Pruſſian provinces are indebted to "the family by which they are governed."

I ſend you the beſt medals that were ſtruck on the occaſion. They are your own. Others are to be diſtributed among the foreign

foreign ambaſſadors, who no doubt will ſend them home. There were ſome in gold, but I thought them too dear, the workmanſhip conſidered. Each general in the ſervice was preſented with a large medal, the price of which is forty crowns. Each commander of a regiment received a ſmall one, of the price of ſix ducats. The large are good, the ſmall very indifferent. I ſpeak of thoſe that were diſtributed yeſterday; and only of the likeneſs.

October 4th, 1786.

The day of homage and its preparations have wholly conſumed the time, and obſtructed all ſociety, ſince the laſt courier; for which reaſon I have at preſent little to ſay. Prince Henry was invited, the other day, principally, as I believe, let him ſay what he will, becauſe Mr. de C*** the father dined with the King. However his Majeſty, before dinner, ſpoke to the Prince concerning Holland, and complained that the diſcourſe of M. de Veyrac, who had informed Goertz he could not interfere, was in exact contradiction to the pro-

miſes of the cabinet of Verſailles. The ſubject of Holland puts him out of temper, as it naturally muſt; and yet, as I have inceſſantly repeated—" when could " we find a better opportunity of acting " diſintereſtedly than at preſent; now that " the Stadtholder, contrary to reaſon and " all propriety, has taken a violent and de- " ciſive part, a few days before the arrival " of the advice which was intended to be " ſent him by the King?"

I have had a very impaſſioned ſcene, concerning Holland, with Count Hertzberg: patience, firmneſs, and ſomething of cunning, on my part; violence, paſſion, and want of reaſon, on his. It is evident to me that he is purſuing ſome ſecret project concerning Holland.

Apropos of M. de C***; he made the King wait an hour for him at dinner. It is a melancholy circumſtance for France that ſhe ſhould continually be, in ſome meaſure, repreſented by certain travellers, when political affairs are in a delicate ſtate. Our Duke de la F**, amidſt an aſſembly of our enemies, ſaid to the Duke of Brunſ-

wick—

wick—" Apropos; pray has your High-
" neſs ever ſerved?"—At Dreſden, a cere-
monious and circumſpect place, where our
embaſſy has given much diſſatisfaction,
this ſame pitiable interrogator, having been
ſhewn a collection of precious ſtones, the
moſt magnificent that exiſts in Europe,
ſaid to the Elector, at high dinner,——
" Very good! Yes indeed very good! Pray
" how much did the collection coſt your
" Highneſs (*i*)?" A certain M. de P**, a
week before the death of the King, dining
at

(*i*) A good account of this collection of baubles, which exiſted in all its ſplendor under Auguſtus II. Elector of Saxony, and by which and ſimilar expences, equally wiſe, a country ſo flouriſhing and induſtrious was overwhelmed in debt, may be ſeen in Hanway's Travels, Vol. I. Chap. 95. The porcelain collection, in ſplendor and folly, equals that of the jewels. The ſame Auguſtus purchaſed forty-eight china vaſes, of the cunning and covetous Frederick William I. of Pruſſia, the great merit of which was their great bulk, at the price of an entire regiment of dragoons. The late King of Pruſſia uſed, in contempt, to call Auguſtus III. the Porcelain King; and informs us, in the Hiſtory of his own Times, that, when acting in conjunction with the Saxons to conquer Moravia for the benefit of this

at Potſdam, with the Prince of Pruſſia, hearing the name of M. de H*** mentioned, exclaimed,—" Apropos; I forgot that " I have a letter from him, which I am to " give you."—And this letter he threw to the Prince acroſs the table. He no doubt imagined ſuch familiarity was exceedingly natural; he who at Prague, taking leave of the Emperor, ſeized and ſhook him by the hand, teſtifying the great ſatisfaction he had received at having ſeen his manœuvres, and renewed his acquaintance with him. And, what is better, it is M. de *** who relates this anecdote, here; which there are Engliſhmen enough would take care ſhould not have been forgotten, had he not with ſo much precaution treaſured it up in his memory. Wherefore permit ſuch people to travel, whom, by means of the places they enjoy, it is eaſy to detain at home? There is no poſſibility of exaggerating the evil which ſuch

Auguſtus, having demanded artillery to beſiege Brunn, the Elector replied he had no money to purchaſe artillery; yet he had lately expended 400,000 crowns on a large green diamond! T.

ridiculous

ridiculous paſquinades produce, at a moment when the ill-deſigning are ſo numerous, and who wiſh that the nation ſhould be judged by ſuch ſpecimens.

Suffer me further to remark, of Meſſieurs de C***, that, fooliſh as the father is, phyſically a fool, a fool unmeaſureable and diſguſting, equally is the ſon a man of great hopes, and appears in all companies with univerſal ſucceſs. Not any man ſo young, with whom I am acquainted, unites ſo much modeſty, ſo much reaſon, and ſuch decent timidity, to ſo great a talent for obſervation; or, to manners ſo agreeable and mild, ſo much caution and wiſe activity. There is no doubt but that the extravagances of the father diſplay theſe qualities to advantage in the ſon; but they exiſt, and on the moſt ſolid baſis; for, in all probability, he has taken an averſion for, by being a continual ſpectator of, the follies of his father. He is one of the ſcions whom, of all the young men I have known, is moſt proper to be tranſplanted into the diplomatic nurſery.

The

The King, all yeſterday, was cold, and taciturn; not an emotion, not a gracious word, not a ſmile. The miniſter Reek, who harangued the ſtates in the name of the Sovereign, promiſed in his diſcourſe that no new tax ſhould be impoſed, during the preſent reign; but that, on the contrary, thoſe that exiſted ſhould be diminiſhed. Was he commanded to make this promiſe, or did he venture to make it uncommanded? Of this I am ignorant, and it is a matter of doubt.

The day before yeſterday the King had ſome domeſtic brawls, and a ſcene of jealouſy, at Charlottenburg, to ſupport from Madam Rietz. The remembrance perhaps remained with him yeſterday: whether or no, the diſcourſe of his miniſter of juſtice ſpoke more pleaſingly than his countenance, however agreeable it may in reality be. He is to depart on the fourth for Sileſia, and does not return till the ſeventeenth.

A part of the palace is at preſent furniſhing, but in a ſimple ſtile.

Public

Public notice has been given that thoſe perſons who had been promiſed reverſions of fiefs ſhould appear; that their reverſions were annulled; and that they were not allowed to ſollicit till firſt there ſhould be a vacant fief, and not for the reverſion of fiefs.

I have ſeen a narrative of what paſſed in Pruſſia. The perſon who wrote it has employed very ſounding expreſſions to depict the enthuſiaſm of the public, and among them the following phraſe of the King.—"I have found Pruſſia very ill, "but I will cure her."

Count Katzerling, who had ſuffered great loſſes during the ſeven years war, and met with very ill treatment from the late Monarch, after having been very graciouſly received by him, has accepted a loan of one hundred and fifty thouſand crowns, for thirty years, without intereſt.

It is ſaid the Biſhop of Warmia will be here within three weeks. He is a very amiable man, with the levity of a Pole; and was much in the favour of the Prince of Pruſſia. The King ſeems to remember this;

this: he has been treated with much greater kindneſs than any other perſon in Pruſſia.

In November the King is to balance the ſtatements of expence and receipt.

Firſt P. S. I forgot to inform you that, for ſo cloudy a day, Prince Henry was yeſterday highly careſſed. He dined and ſupped with his Majeſty, and ſingly attended him to ſee the illuminations.

Second P. S. I return from court, the ambaſſadors were mingled promiſcuouſly; but, as the miniſters of the two imperial courts were together, the King proceeded in rather a ſingularly retrograde manner. It ſo happened (becauſe of the number of Engliſhmen that were to be preſented) that Lord Dalrymple was the neareſt to the King's door, and preceded the imperial ambaſſadors. The King began with the latter. He then returned to Lord Dalrymple; after which he deſcended much lower toward Count d'Eſt**, and ſpoke no further to him than by thanking, in general,

general, the foreign ambaſſadors for their illuminations. Should this neglect of cuſtomary forms continue, I think it would be right to let it be underſtood that it gives diſpleaſure; for the rumor of the hatred of the King for the French is daily ſtrengthened; and rumor ſometimes in reality produces the event it proclaims.

LETTER XXXII.

Dreſden, October 4th, 1786.

IT appears extremely probable that habit will be the conqueror; and that Frederick-William will never be more than what his penetrating uncle had foreboded. No terms are too hyperbolical to expreſs the exceſſive negligence of his domeſtic affairs, their diſorder, and his waſte of time. The valets dread his violence; but they are the firſt to turn his incapacity to deriſion. Not a paper in its place; not a word written at the bottom of any of the memorials; not a letter perſonally opened; no human power could induce him to read forty lines together. It is at once the tumult of vehemence and the torpor of inanity. His natural ſon, the Count of Brandenburg, is the only one who can rouſe him from his lethargy; he loves the boy to adoration. His countenance brightens the moment he appears,

appears, and he amuſes himſelf, every morning, a conſiderable time with this child (*k*), and this, even of his pleaſures, is the only one in which he is regular; for the remaining hours are waſted in abſolutely inexplicable confuſion. His ill-humour the other day, for example, which I had ſuppoſed was occaſioned by the quarrel at Charlottenburg, induced me to enquire into particulars. It was nothing more than a muſical diſpute. The King would have a chamber concert. He ordered two and twenty muſicians to be aſſembled. It was his intention to have performed himſelf; his violoncello was uncaſed and tuned. Fourteen muſicians only came; and paſſions, threats, intemperance ſucceeded. The valets de chambre laid the blame on Kalikan, whoſe buſineſs it was to ſummon the muſicians. Kalikan was thrown into priſon. Duport, the famous violoncello player, and conſequently the favourite muſician, came to the aid of Kalikan, and gave the King the letter

(*k*) He died laſt year.

which

which the valets de chambre had intercepted. His choler then became outrageous; every body fled; but no further effects have followed this ſubaltern prevarication.—Poor King!—Poor country (*l*)!

I am perſuaded of two particulars; the one that his Majeſty has conceived the idea and the hope of becoming a great man, by making himſelf wholly and purely German, and by hectoring French ſuperiority; the other that he is already in his heart determined to reſign buſineſs to a principal miniſter. He has not perhaps yet owned the fact to himſelf; but at leaſt he is inwardly convinced it muſt be ſo.—In this caſe his laſt reſource will be to call in the aid of the Duke of Brunſwick, or of *my uncle*.

(*l*) The late deſpot made druminers of Mr. Mara, (the huſband of the celebrated ſinger) and another muſician, whoſe name we have forgotten, for having the ſpirit to diſobey an arbitrary mandate; and drummers for hours they remained: to their diſgrace, as was intended; but to the diſgrace of himſelf, in reality; and of the nation that will ſuffer ſuch tyrants, petty as the inſtance was, to exiſt. T.

The

The firſt of theſe plans is the work and the maſter-piece of Count Hertzberg. He has ſaid, and juſtly ſaid—" There is only " one mode of acquiring reputation; which " is to impart an impulſe to your nation, " that under your reign a new kind of " glory may take date. This impulſe you " can only give by acting determinately. " What can you ever effect as the partiſan " of France? You can only be the feeble " imitator of Frederick II. As a German " you will be an original, perſonally re- " vered throughout Germany, adored by " your people, vaunted by men of letters, " reſpected by Europe, &c. &c." The explication of the enigma is that Count Hertzberg imagined this to be the ſhorteſt road, to make himſelf prime miniſter.

But the neceſſities of accident demand, or will ſoon demand, a different perſon. Servile as the country is, it is not habituated to miniſterial ſlavery; and Hertzberg, long a ſubaltern, rather crafty than able, deceitful than cunning, violent than determined, vain than ambitious, old, infirm, and not promiſing any long duration

of life, will not bend the people to this ſervility. They muſt have (for as this Welner, who is ſo much attended to at preſent, and whoſe influence near ſpectators only can diſcover, may puſh his pretenſions) I repeat, they muſt have a man whoſe rank can quell ſubordinate candidates; and the number of ſuch men is not great. I can diſcover but two men of this kind; Prince Henry, and the Duke of Brunſwick. To the diſadvantage of not living in the country, the latter adds that of being neceſſarily formidable to a feeble and indolent, but vain and jealous, Prince; and who may imagine that, Prince Henry will not commit the ſame injury on his, the Sovereign's, reputation as a Prince who cannot leave his own country, and reſide here conſtantly as prime miniſter, without being undoubtedly and conſpicuouſly ſuch. For which reaſon the credit of Prince Henry daily ſtrengthens, in ſpite of his ill addreſs. However he has boaſted leſs within ſome few weeks; and, inſtead of not returning from Rheinſberg, whither he again goes during the abſence of the King, till the

middle of December, as was his intention, he will be here on the ſame day as his nephew.

Yet, excluſive of the perſonal defects of Prince Henry, and the errors of which he will indubitably be guilty, how ſhall we reconcile the German ſyſtem and the Monarch's hatred of the French to the confidence granted this Prince? The ſymptoms of ſuch hatred, whether ſyſtematic or natural, continually increaſe and correſpond. The King when he diſmiſſed Roux and Groddart ſaid—"*Voilà donc de ces B***** "*dont je me ſuis défait* (*m*)." The real crime of Roux perhaps was that he kept a jeweſs, whom the Prince of Pruſſia wiſhed to poſſeſs, and obſtinately refuſed to liſten to any kind of accommodation. A French merchant brought ſome toys (*n*) to ſhew him, to whom he harſhly replied—"I "have baubles already of this kind to the "amount of ſeven millions." He then

(*m*) "I have rid myſelf of theſe ——" The epithet muſt be left with the reader, there is no danger he ſhould be more indelicate than the original. T.

(*n*) *Des gentilleſſes*, probably jewels. T.

turned his back, and did not utter another word, except to bid him not go to the Queen; for if he did he ſhould not be paid. The action was far from blameable; it is the manner only that I notice. Boden was paſſably well received, except that the only conſolation he found for his fever was—" Go to Berlin, and keep your-" ſelf quiet, for you have a companion " that will ſtay by you theſe three months." —Boden ſaid to him—' I ſhould have had ' thouſands of meſſages to your Majeſty, ' had I dared to take charge of them.'— " You did well to refuſe," replied the King; and in ſo rough a tone that Boden durſt not even give him the letters of Duſaulx and Bitaubé.

Launay is treated with ſeverity, and even with tyranny. He was confined to his chamber while his papers were examined, independent of a general prohibition not to leave Berlin. One Délâtre, his perſonal enemy, has been oppoſed to him on all occaſions, and has been ſent for to become an informer againſt him; a man devoid of faith or honour; ſuſpected

of

of great crimes; a diſſipator of the King's money; an unbridled libelliſt, and as ſuch denounced by our court to that of Berlin, which officially returned thanks, two years ago, for our behaviour on that ſubject. I ſay he was ſent for; becauſe, owing, as he does, eighty thouſand crowns to the King, would he have ventured to come without a paſſport, or being aſked? It is evident that Launay is perſecuted as a farmer of the taxes, and as a Frenchman. It is believed that the collectors and farmers-general will all be diſmiſſed (*o*) at the feſtival of the Trinity; the time when thoſe accounts that ſhall actually be ſettled are to be examined. This is the grand ſacrifice that is to be offered up to the nation. But what is to ſupply the deficiency in the re-

(*o*) *Congedier la regie.*—The late King introduced the French into Pruſſia, to farm and collect the taxes, at the beginning of his reign. It was one of the moſt odious of the acts of his internal adminiſtration; in which, whenever his own revenues were out of the queſtion, he endeavoured to act for the good of the people. *Endeavoured*, but moſt frequently did not; of this his innumerable monopolies are proofs inconteſtable. T.

venue? For in fine the farmers, laſt year, paid ſix millions eight hundred thouſand German crowns; and it is not only impoſſible to replace this immenſe ſum, but, knowing the country, it is eaſy to foreſee that the German farmers of finance will ſcarcely collect the half of the amount.

Of what will the convocation of the provincial and finance counſellors, and the deputies of the merchants, be productive? Of complaints, and not one project which will not be diſtinct, partial, and in contradiction to the general ſyſtem; or ſuch as the nature of things preſents as a ſyſtem; for in reality not any as yet exiſts.

I return, and ſay—all theſe projects are contrary to the perſonal hopes of Prince Henry. Will he make all his paſſions ſubſervient to his ambition? (He is far from poſſeſſing that degree of fortitude.) Or, does he diſſemble that he may obtain power? Of this I do not believe him uniformly capable. I rather fear he is once again the dupe of careſſes; which, however, it muſt be confeſſed, are more ſubſtantial and more marked than they ever had

had been before. I particularly fear he ſhould be in too great haſte, and too eager to gather the harveſt before it be ripe; neglecting the care of providing ſeed for futurity.

The King has given the miniſter of juſtice, Reek, a box of petrified ſhells, ſplendidly enriched with diamonds, eſtimated to be worth twelve thouſand crowns; a ſimilar box to the miniſter Gaudi, and ten thouſand crowns; another of the ſame kind to General Moellendorf; a fine ſolitaire to the Marquis di Lucheſini; and a diamond ring to Philippi, the lieutenant of the police. He has farther broken up three boxes ſet with diamonds, of which thirty rings have been made; theſe he has taken with him to diſtribute in Sileſia.

Take good note, that Launay has not had the alternative of accepting a ſalary of ſix thouſand crowns, or his diſmiſſion; he has merely received information, under the form of an order, that his ſalary was reduced to ſix thouſand crowns.

Count Hertzberg, this day, gave a grand dinner to foreigners, to which the new Spaniſh ambaſſador was invited, but neither Count d'Eſt** nor any Frenchman; which affectation was the more remarkable ſince all the Engliſh, Piedmonteſe, Swediſh, and not only foreign ambaſſadors but complimentary envoys, were there aſſembled. Count d'Eſt** takes a proper revenge; he gives a grand dinner to-morrow, to which Count Hertzberg is invited.

P. S. Mr. Ewart, the ſecretary of the Engliſh embaſſy, ſaid to me yeſterday, in the preſence of fifteen people, Count Hertzberg ſupporting him with voice and geſture, in theſe preciſe terms,—" The Stadt-" holder is, by the conſtitution, the exe-" cutive power in Holland; or to ſpeak " more intelligibly, he is preciſely in Hol-" land what the King is in England."—I replied, in the moſt ironical and dry tone, —' It is to be hoped he will not be be-' headed by his ſubjects.'—The laughers were not with Mr. Ewart (*p*).

(*p*) The laughers were blockheads. T.

Boden

Boden has ſent your packets. The extracts from the pleadings of Linguet, which are excellent (I ſpeak of the extracts) have been perfectly ſucceſsful. I intreat you will not fail to ſend me the continuation. You cannot find a better means of procuring me cuſtomers than by things of this kind.

There is a demur concerning Alvenſleben. It is Hertzberg who ſupports Goltz.

Number LXXVIII. of the courier of the Lower Rhine is ſo inſolent, relative to the King of France and his ambaſſador, that I imagine it would be proper to make a formal complaint. This might ſomewhat curb Hertzberg, who is the accomplice of Manſon, and who may do us many other favours of a like nature, ſhould this paſs with impunity. You are not aware of the influence theſe gazettes have in Germany.

LETTER XXXIII.

Magdeburg, October 9th, 1786.

LEAVING Berlin, I by chance diſcovered the perſon who has remained four days ſhut up in the apartment of the Prince of H** (of R****) who is no other than that Croiſy, formerly St. Huberty, and once the huſband of our celebrated St. Huberty (*q*), whoſe marriage was annulled; counſellor Bonneau (*r*) of the Prince of

(*q*) The firſt ſinger at the French opera.

(*r*) Bonneau is a ſea term, in the French language, and ſignifies Buoy. But the word was choſen by Voltaire, becauſe it was an apt metaphor, as the name of a Pandar. From him it is here borrowed, and is ſeveral times ſo applied in this work.

Donc, pour cacher comme on put cette affaire,
Le Roi choiſit le conſeiller Bonneau,
Confident ſûr, et très bon Tourangeau.
Il eut l'emploi, qui certes n'eſt pas mince,
Et qu'a la cour, où tout ſe peint en beau,
Nous appellons être l'ami du prince,
Mais qu'à la ville, et ſurtout en province,
Les gens groſſiers ont nommé Maquereau.

La Pucelle. Chant prem.

Pruſſia;

Pruſſia; and relative to his own wife, a bankrupt, a forger, in a word a knight of induſtry, of the moſt deſpicable order, and concerning whom all foreigners aſk,—" Is " it poſſible ſuch a man can be an officer " in the French ſervice?"—I am no longer aſtoniſhed that the Prince of H** ſhould be coldly received by the King. To come expreſly to lay the train to the mine of corruption; and to depend upon it as a certainty that the combuſtibles ſhould catch fire, from a knowledge of the errors of the Sovereign; to found hopes of ſucceſs on the ill opinion we have of him, and in a manner to proclaim this knowledge, by a rapid journey from Paris to Berlin, deſtitute of all other pretext; ſince the Prince of H** and his minion have ſtaid only five days, and are already gone back to Paris; this is at once to diſplay fooliſh cunning and contemptible conduct. I imagine it is of importance that we ſhould tell the King aloud, and with the ſtrongly marked, ironical tone of diſdain, which ſhall make him feel, without debaſing ourſelves to ſpeak more openly, that this manœuvre

manœuvre was totally unknown to our cabinet: for I am perſuaded, from ſome half-phraſes which I have heard thoſe who wiſh us ill drop, that they do not deſire any thing better than to fix this blot upon us.

I have travelled through Brandenburg to Magdeburg with Count Hatzfeldt, who had been ſent by the Elector of Mayence to compliment the King on his acceſſion, and Baron G***, ſent for the ſame purpoſe by the Duke of Deux-Ponts. The latter, formerly a captain of huſſars in our ſervice, is a handſome blockhead, who could only have been choſen becauſe he is the brother of Madame Eixbeck, the Duke's miſtreſs. Count Hatzfeldt is a man of great urbanity, and whoſe knowledge and underſtanding are deſerving of eſteem. It ſeems he will remain ſome time at Berlin, that he may diſcover what ſhall be created out of the chaos. I converſed much on Mayence; the Elector is better, but does not promiſe any length of life. The two perſons who, in all appearance, are moſt likely to ſucceed him

are Feckenberg and Alberg. The firſt is wholly Auſtrian; the latter a man of abilities, of whom the higheſt opinion is entertained, whoſe political inclinations are little known, and who diſſembles, like Sixtus V. while yet a monk.

That court at preſent ſeems to be exceedingly averſe to the Emperor, who every day, indeed, by a multitude of traits, both private and public, and which are really inconceivable, increaſes univerſal hatred. It is impoſſible to depict the effect which his anſwer to the requeſt of the Hungarians produced—(*Pueri ſunt pueri: pueri puerilia tractant*)—together with the violent abolition of all their privileges. But, on the one hand, the great landholders are at Vienna, there enchained by their places, and almoſt kept under a guard, ſo that they are in truth the hoſtages of the ſlavery of the Hungarians; and, on the other, the ariſtocracy being exceſſively odious to the people, there is in this ſuperb and formidable country neither unity of intereſt, nor center of concord. The regular troops are beſide poſted, and provided with

with artillery, ſupported by veterans, coloniſts, &c. &c.

An Engliſhman, very much my friend, and a man of excellent obſervation, whom I have happened to meet with here, and who has viſited all the camps of the Emperor, while ſpeaking in raptures of thoſe formidable pillars of his power, Hungary, Moravia, Bohemia, and Galicia, &c. confeſſes that the inferiority of his troops, compared with the Pruſſian army, has infinitely ſurpaſſed his expectation. He affirms it is impoſſible, either relative to the individual or collective information of the officers or to the military talents of the Emperor, which are in reality null, in ſo much that he appears incapable of conceiving ſuch complicated evolutions—he affirms, I ſay, it is impoſſible to compare the two nations: with this difference that the Emperor, like Cadmus, can make men ſpring out of the earth; and that the Pruſſian army, once annihilated, will be incapable of renovation, except from its treaſury. Should *a man* once be ſeated upon the Auſtrian throne, there will be

an

an end to the liberties of Europe. The health of the Emperor is ſuppoſed not to be good; his activity gradually decreaſes; he ſtill however ſurpaſſes his real ſtrength, but his projects ſeem like the wiſhes of an expiring patient, who raves on recovery. He is ſuppoſed at preſent to be on very cool terms with the Empreſs of Ruſſia.

LETTER XXXIV.

Brunſwick, October 14th, 1786.

THOUGH I ride poſt, you perceive it is not in the ſpirit of diſſipation. Alas! what mode of life in reality leſs correſponds with my natural inclination than that indolent activity, if ſo I may call it, which hurries me into every tumult, and among the proud and faſtidious, to the utter loſs of time! For ſuch is the general conſequence of the confuſion of ſociety among the Germans, who converſe as they call it *between themſelves* although thirty perſons ſhould be preſent. Thus am I robbed of ſtudy, deprived of my favourite purſuits, my own thoughts, and forced inceſſantly to comply with forms ſo foreign, not to ſay odious, to my nature. You yourſelf, who lead a life ſo full of hurry, but who however aſſociate with the choſen few, in deſpite of all the gifts of nature,

nature, you muſt feel how difficult it is abruptly to paſs from the buzz of men to the meditations of the cloſet. Yet is this indiſpenſably neceſſary, in order to manage the *aſide* ſpeeches, by which the current news of the day is acquired and conſequences divined. We muſt gallop five days with a Prince, and purſue all the phyſical and moral meanderings of the man, in public and in private, before we can obtain the right, or the opportunity, to aſk him a queſtion; or which is better to catch a word, which may be equivalent to both queſtion and anſwer.

But who knows this better than you? I only wiſh you to underſtand my excurſions are not the effect of chance, and ſtill leſs of whim. Let me add that each of my journeys improves my local knowledge, a ſubject on which I have made it a law not to be eaſily ſatisfied. I hope that, among others, you will perceive by my memorial on Saxony, and by that on the Pruſſian ſtates, which are in reality works of labour, and which you will not have a ſight of for ſome months to come, that

I have profoundly ſtudied the countries which I have wiſhed to underſtand, and as ardently in men as in books; with this difference however that I ſcarcely dare confide in the mere aſſertion of the beſt informed man, unleſs he brings written proofs (*s*). The neceſſity of that ſpecies of ſuperſtitious conſcientiouſneſs with which I am almoſt mechanically impreſſed, whenever I take up the pen, has been demonſtrated to my own mind too often for it ever to forſake me.

Yet whither am I travelling in this painful road? If I may depend on the few reports which your friendſhip has deigned to make me of the ſenſation which my diſpatches have produced, when corrected arranged and embelliſhed by you (For how is it poſſible for me to correct that which I write at the moment, by ſnatches, with lightning-like rapidity, and without having time to read?) they have given ſatisfaction. If I judge by the reiterated ſymptoms of the extreme inattention which

(*s*) Are there not, *cæteris paribus*, as many written as related lies? T.

long

long ſilence ſuppoſes, on queſtions the moſt important, on requeſts the moſt inſtantaneous, and ſometimes of abſolute forgetfulneſs of the greateſt part of theſe things, I ſhould be induced to believe that my letters are read, at the moſt, with as much intereſt as a packet would be the materials of which are tolerably clear and orderly, and that the reading produces not the leaſt ultimate effect. Should this be ſo is it worth the trouble (I put the queſtion to you, whoſe energetic ſentiments and high thoughts ſo often eſcape, notwithſtanding all the contagion of levity, careleſſneſs, egotiſm, and inconſiſtency which exhale out of every door in the country which you inhabit,) is it right, I ſay, that I ſhould ſacrifice, to an intereſt ſo ſubordinate as that of curioſity, my inclinations, my talents, my time, and my powers? I believe you know me to be no quack; you know it is not my cuſtom to ſpeak of my pains, and of my labours, in fuſtian terms. Permit me then, my good and dear friend, to proteſt that they both are great. I keep three men totally occu-

pied in mechanically copying the materials I have arranged. I am aſſiſted by the labour and the knowledge of ſeveral; all my moments, all my thoughts, are there, thence depart, and thither return.—Should the product be no greater (and I may ſay to you that you cannot yet eſtimate the whole product, for the greateſt of my labours are ſtill in my deſk) (*t*), it muſt either be the fault of my own incapacity or of my ſituation; perhaps of both, and perhaps alſo of the latter only. But here I am wholly, and as a man of thirty-ſeven ought not to be wholly, devoted to nullities; for nullities they are if nothing be produced, nothing affected, either in behalf of myſelf or others.

If therefore any thing *be* produced, afford me ſome proof of it; and when, for example, I aſk any queſtion, for the purpoſe of more effectually executing my truſt, let it be anſwered. When I ſay it is neceſſary I ſhould have a plan of operations of ſuch

(*t*) The author no doubt refers to his *Hiſtoire de la Monarchie Pruſſienne.* T.

or

or ſuch a kind to propoſe, becauſe that I ſhall be immediately queſtioned on the ſubject, and ſhall loſe an opportunity which probably may never be recovered ſhould I be caught unprovided, let ſuch a plan of operations be ſent me.

If all this is to have any good effect in my favour, let me be told ſo; for in my preſent ſituation I have great need of encouragement, if it were but to empower me to yield without madneſs to the impulſes of my zeal. I ſay without madneſs; for, to ſpeak only of the vileſt, but notwithſtanding the moſt palpable of wants, when I perceive that I am very unable to make my accounts balance with my preſent appointments, ought I not to clog the down-hill wheel? And what have I to hope from theſe appointments, when I recollect how much they are in arrear; and that a change of miniſtry may increaſe my perſonal debts with the ſums which my friends have advanced me, for the ſervice of thoſe who cannot be ignorant I am myſelf incapable of making ſuch advances? Yet, ſhould I ſtop, is there not an end to

all utility from what I have hitherto effected? Shall I then have any thing remaining except regret for time loſt, and the deep, the rankling affliction of having attached people to my fortunes for whom I can do nothing, but what muſt be an ill compenſation, and at my own expence, for all which they have done for me?

Pardon theſe expanſions of the heart. To whom may I confide my anxieties, if not to you, my friend, my conſolation, my guide, and my ſupport? To whom may I ſay, what is all this to me, ſince it does not produce me even motive? For that I expend in the buſineſs I have undertaken, and not in private gratifications. In truth I ſhould be ſuſceptible of no other, were the hoped futurity come, and I had no dependents. You well know that money to me is nothing, at leaſt when I have any. Where am I going, whither leading others? Have I made a good bargain by bartering my life, ſtormy as it was, but ſo mingled with enjoyments of which it was not in human power to deprive me, for a ſterile activity, which ſnatches me

even

ven from the frequent and delightful ffuſions of your friendſhip? You are to ne but a ſtateſman; you, for the preſſure of whoſe hand I would relinquiſh all the thrones on earth.—Alas I am much better formed for friendſhip than for politics.

Poſt Scriptum, began at Helmſtadt, and finiſhed at Brunſwick, *October* 14*th*, 1786.

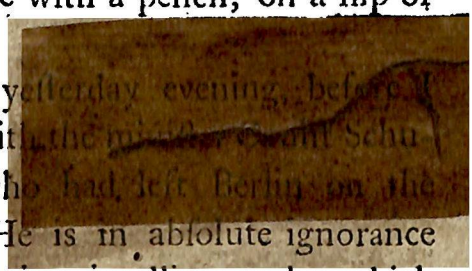
They write from Silberberg, in Sileſia, that the King's carriage has been overturned, and that he has received contuſions on the head and on the arm. The coachman, it is added, expired on the place. The news reached me yeſterday, at Magdeburg, and the ſame has been written to General Prittwitz; it probably exceeds the truth, but is not wholly without foundation. The extreme agitation of the Duke of Brunſwick and my own emotions made me profoundly feel the fortunes that reſt on this Monarch's head. The Duke immediately ſent off a courier; and, as I ſhall follow him to Brunſwick, where he wiſhes to ſpeak to me at large

concerning Holland, I ſhall learn more circumſtantial intelligence, and ſuch as will be indubitable. I have not time to add a ſingle word; I write while the horſes are changed.

From Brunſwick, October 14th, 1786.

Not having found an opportunity of ſending off theſe few lines I continue—

I arrived here two hours before the Duke. As ſoon as he came to Brunſwick, he wrote to me with a pencil, on a ſlip of paper,



" I ſpoke, yeſterday evening, before I
" departed, with the miniſter Count Schu-
" lemburg, who had left Berlin on the
" eleventh. He is in abſolute ignorance
" of the alarming intelligence by which
" we were ſo much affected; and, as I
" have heard nothing on the ſubject ſince,
" I begin to have better hopes. I expect
" my courier will arrive early in the morn-
" ing. I write you this, *Monſieur le*
" *Comte* (*u*) from my mother's, and I hope
" you

(*u*) My Lord would be too ſtrong an expreſſion; there are but few foreign Counts who in wealth and dignity

" you will do me the favour to come to " me early to-morrow morning and dine " with us."

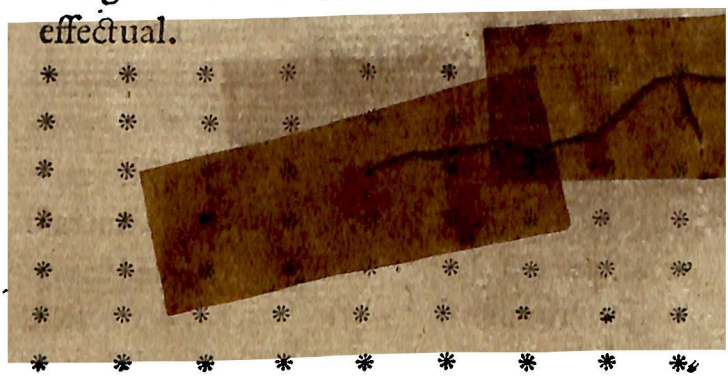
It appears to be very probable that no material harm has happened to the Sovereign.

The ſplendor of the talents and urbanity of the Duke appeared perfect at Magdeburg. Nothing could be more awful than his manœuvres, nothing ſo inſtructive as his ſchool, nothing ſo finiſhed, ſo connected, ſo perfect, as his conduct in every reſpect. He was the ſubject of admiration to a great number of foreigners, who had crowded to Magdeburgh, and he certainly ſtood in no need of the contraſt which the Duke of Weimar, and the Prince of Deſſau afforded; the latter the weakeſt of men, the former induſtriouſly labouring to be ſomething, but ill provided with requiſites, if we are to judge him by appearances. He might and ought to become a Prince of importance. According

dignity are equal to the idea which the Engliſh word Lord conveys; and the epithet Count, when the courtly Duke of Brunſwick ſpeaks, would be too familiar. T.

to

to all probabilities, however, Saxony will devolve on him for want of children in the Electoral branch; and it is an afflicting perſpective to contemplate the deſtruction of all the labours of the worthy Prince who at preſent governs the country; and who, tormented in his childhood, unhappy in youth, and truly reſpectable in manhood, will perhaps deſcend to the tomb with the bitter affliction of feeling that all the good he has done will be rendered ineffectual.



I have

I have learnt a fact which will afford ſome pleaſure to M. de Segur, if he be ſtill living. A foundery has been built at Hanover, at a great expence, which has coſt the King of England near one hundred thouſand livres. (Upward of four thouſand pounds ſterling.) The Duke of Brunſwick, not being ſatisfied with his own foundery, had two cannon caſt at Hanover; and they were ſo ill caſt that they were ſoon obliged to be laid aſide. It is not to be ſuppoſed, when we recollect the connexions between the Duke and the King of England, that this was occaſioned by any trick in the founders; the fact therefore is a proof that they are bad workmen.

By the next courier I hope to ſend you the exact reſult of the diſpoſitions of Berlin, and the Duke, relative to Holland. He has promiſed me a preciſe ſtatement of the propoſitions which appear to him neceſſary, and he did not conceal the extreme deſire he had that they ſhould be accepted by France.

Theſe

Theſe Dutch diſturbances daily preſent a more threatning aſpect for the repoſe of Europe; if not at the preſent moment, at leaſt from future contingencies, and the coolneſs and diſtruſt to which they will give riſe.

LETTER XXXV.

Brunſwick, October 16th, 1786.

THE two converſations I have had with the Duke have hitherto been but vague reſpecting Holland, and indeed almoſt foreign to the ſubject. His courier, having brought him the news of hopes of an accommodation, and of the retreat of the perſon who of all theſe concerned with M. de Veirac was ſuppoſed to be the chief firebrand, having in fine brought him details which lead him to imagine that his interference will not be neceſſary, or not yet wanted in Holland, he paſſed rapidly over the country to come to one which is of infinitely greater importance to him; I mean to ſay Pruſſia. He only diſcovered himſelf to be greatly averſe to the party of the Stadtholder, and well convinced that the right of preſentation ought to remain ſuch as it was in its origin; that the conſtitution

ſtitution of Gueldres, Frieſeland, and Utrecht, evidently was in want of reformation, with reſpect to the inconceivable regulation of the magiſtrates, who are revocable *ad nutum*; that in a word the Prince, who from abſolute monarchical authority, which he in reality poſſeſſed, was ſunken into abſolute diſcredit, by conduct the moſt abject, and the folly of having claimed that as a right, in contempt of all law, all decency, and all popular prejudice, which he effectually poſſeſſed, was not deſerving of the leaſt ſupport. But that, from reſpect to Pruſſia, and particularly to retard commotions, it was requiſite to reſtore him the decorum of pageantry; except that watch ſhould be kept over his connexions. And here he explained himſelf on the ſubject of Harris, and even concerning Prince Louis of Brunſwick, nearly in the manner I ſhould have done myſelf. In concluſion however he not only did not inform me of any thing on the ſubject, but he imperceptibly declined that debate which a few days before he had provoked.

I re-

I repeat, there is ſome news arrived of which I am ignorant that has occaſioned this change in his proceedings. My information is in general much too confined. Thus for example it is very ſingular, nor is it leſs embarraſſing, and, to ſpeak plainly, it is tolerably ridiculous, that it ſhould be the Duke who ſhould inform me of the treaty of commerce ſigned between France and England, not one of the articles of which I am acquainted with, and on which occaſion I know not what face to wear. As my uſual method is not to conceal myſelf behind any veil of myſtery, which hides the inſignificance of certain ambaſſadors, the part I had to act was not a little difficult. I ſhould learn a thouſand times more were I myſelf better informed. In this, as in every thing elſe, fortune follows the ſucceſsful.

Returning to Pruſſia, it was quite a different affair, for of this I know as much as the Duke. His confidence was the leſs limited and the more profuſe, becauſe I preſently ſet him at his eaſe with reſpect to Prince Henry, whom he neither loves

nor

nor eſteems. I perceive with inquietude that his opinions and fears are ſimilar to my own. He is diſſatisfied with moſt of the proceedings and public acts of the King, with that croud of titles, and that maſs of nobility, which has been added ſo prodigally; in ſo much that it will be henceforward much more difficult to find a man than a nobleman in the Pruſſian ſtates; with the promiſe made to the Prince of Deſſau (whoſe only merit is ſuch an exceſs of enthuſiaſm for myſticiſm and viſionaries that, when Lavater came to Bremen, he addreſſed the moſt earneſt ſupplications to him to come and pay him a viſit, in order that he might adore him) and perhaps with that given to the Duke of Weimar (who to the ſame inclinations, and more lively paſſions, adds greater underſtanding; but who is too much in debt for his military projects to be otherwiſe regarded than as a money ſpeculation) to reſtore the one to and admit the other into the Pruſſian ſervice; by which rank in the army will be violated, and the army diſcouraged and vitiated; a ſyſtem very oppoſite

oppoſite to that of Frederick II, who ſaid of the few grandees who were employed in his time—" In the name of God, my dear " Moellendorf, rid me of *theſe Princes.*" The Duke is equally diſſatisfied with that fluctuation which occaſions eſſays to be made on twenty ſyſtems at once; with the moſt of the perſons choſen; with domeſtic diſorder; with nocturnal rites; and with the anecdotes the augury of which from day to day becomes more inauſpiciouſly characteriſtic, &c. &c. In a word, ſhould I tranſcribe our converſation, I ſhould but ſend new copies of old diſpatches.

" Believe me," ſaid he, " I may, in a " certain degree, ſerve you as a thermo- " meter, for if I perceive there are no " hopes of a firm and noble regimen, and " that therefore the day of the houſe of " Brandenburg is come, I ſhall not be the " laſt to ſound a retreat. I never received " money from the King of Pruſſia, and I " am well determined never to accept any " thing from him, though I mean to re- " main in the ſervice. It has, as you have " ſeen, been a dear ſervice to me. I am

" independent. I wiſh to pay a tribute " of reſpect to the memory of the great man " who is no more, and am ready to ſhed " my blood, if that might cement his " work; but I will not, even by my pre- " ſence, become the accomplice of its de- " molition. Our debts never exceed our " abilities. I ſhall provide in the beſt " manner in my power for my country " and my children; theſe I ſhall leave in " great order. I keep up my family con- " nexions. We perhaps ſhall be the laſt " who will be ſmote by the overthrow of " the Germanic body, becauſe of the con- " fraternity which unites us to the Elector " of Hanover. I therefore ſhall no fur- " ther follow the deſtiny of the Pruſſian " monarchy than as its government ſhall " maintain its wiſdom, its dignity, &c. " &c."

At preſent the Duke deſpairs of nothing; and in this he is right. He ſuppoſes that no perſon has yet found his proper place: I think like him, and I perceive he hopes his turn will come; of this neither can I doubt, unleſs the annihila-

tion of the Pruſſian power has been decreed by fate.

He has informed me of the very ſingular fact that M. de G***, the father, has demanded to be admitted into the ſervice of the King of Pruſſia, and has pretended to diſcloſe all the hoſtile plans of the Emperor, whoſe alliance, nevertheleſs, this ſame M. de G*** loudly affirms will terminate, with France, the day that Prince Kaunitz dies.

The Duke is very far from being relieved of all his fears concerning the projects of the Emperor, whoſe puiſſance and adviſers he holds in infinite dread. True it is that his inconſiſtency ſhould render his deſigns and the execution of them abortive; that the irrationality of his perſonal conduct ſhould haſten his end; that the Arch-Duke Francis appears to be a cypher; that among the perſons who have influence there is not one formidable man, eſpecially in the army; and that Alvenſzy and Kinſky, the one manufacturer for the infantry, and the other for the cavalry, poſſeſs only ambiguous abilities, &c. But men ſtart

up at the moment when they are the leaſt expected; accident only is neceſſary to rank them in their proper place. Condé, Spinola, and the Duke of Brunſwick himſelf, prove that it is poſſible to be born a general. There is a Prince of Waldeck in the Auſtrian army, who it is ſaid announces grand talents.

The numerous trifling anecdotes which the Duke and I have mutually related to each other, would be too tedious for inſertion, and out of their place alſo here. An anecdote, merely as ſuch, is equally devoid of propriety and information; ſuch will have their turn hereafter; but there is one which relates too much to the Ruſſian ſyſtem for it to be paſſed over in ſilence.

The Czarina has, for ſome months paſt, appropriated to herſelf the poſſeſſion and the revenues of the poſts of Courland, leaving a ſmall part only to the Duke, in order that this branch of adminiſtration might not appear to be wholly in the hands of foreigners. Thus does this ſame Ruſſia, that maintains an envoy at Courland,

land, although there is none at Courland from Peterſburg, and that here, as in Poland, proclaims her will to the Duke and to the ſtates, by her ambaſſador, who is the real ſovereign of the country; this Ruſſia, that, for ſome years paſt, has unequivocally and openly declared a certain canton of Courland appertained to her, and without ſeeking any other pretext than that of giving a more uniform line to her limits, makes no ſecret of not underſtanding any other code, any other claims, any other manifeſtoes, than thoſe which the Gauls alleged to the Etruſcans — "Our "right exiſts in our arms. Whatever the "ſtrong can ſeize upon that is the right "of the ſtrong."—She will one of theſe days declare Courland is hers, that the Poliſh Ukraine is hers, and that Finland is hers. And, for example, this latter revolution, which will be a very ſalutary one to her becauſe that ſhe will then truly become inattackable, and almoſt inacceſſible, to all Europe united, will be effected, whenever ſhe ſhall make the attempt, if we do not take good heed. Be the day

when it will that I ſhall be informed of this having taken place; and even of the new ſyſtem of Sweden being totally overthrown, I ſhall not feel any ſurprize.

The Duke alſo told me that the Emperor is greatly improving his artillery; that his ſix-pounders are equivalent in force to our former eight-pounders; and to this advantage they add that of lightneſs, in ſo great a degree, that only four horſes are neceſſary to draw them, while even in Pruſſia ſix are ſtill requiſite. As well as I remember he attributes this double improvement to the *conical* (*w*) conſtruction of the chamber. I only relate this that you may verify the truth of the fact, by people who are acquainted with ſuch affairs; the diminution of two horſes in eight being a thing of infinite importance, and the more ſo as there would be a ſervant the leſs.

The manner in which I have been received by the Duke was infinitely friendly on his part, though ſomewhat partici-

(*w*) *Faite en poire*; made in the form of a pear. T.

pating,

pating, as far as relates to freedom of converſation, of my equivocal mode of exiſtence at Berlin. I believe I may without preſumption affirm I am not diſagreeable to this Prince, and that, were I accredited by any commiſſion whatever, I ſhould be one of the moſt proper perſons to treat with him with efficacy. This able man appears to me to have but one weakneſs, which is the prodigious dread of having his reputation injured, even by the moſt contemptible Zoilus. Yet has he lately expoſed himſelf to vexatious blame in deference to his firſt miniſter, M. von Feronce, which I cannot comprehend. This M. von Feronce, and M. von Munchauſen, grand maſter of the court, a man who is reported to have little delicacy concerning money matters, have farmed the lottery; an action ſhameful in itſelf, and which I cannot reconcile to Feronce, who is really a man of merit. Two merchants, named Oeltz and Nothnagel, have gained a *quaterne*, which is equivalent to the ſum of eighteen thouſand crowns. The payment of this has not only been refuſed but, as

it was neceſſary to act with fraud to effect their purpoſe, the merchants have undergone numerous oppreſſions; they have even been impriſoned; all which acts they have lately publiſhed in a printed caſe, which contains nothing but the facts concerning the ſuit, and have laid an appeal againſt the Duke, or againſt his judges, before the tribunal of Wetzlar; I own I do not underſtand this abſence of firmneſs, or of circumſpection.

October 17th, 1786.

P. S. I have juſt received authentic intelligence concerning the King of Pruſſia. It was one of his chaſſeurs to whom a very ſerious accident happened; the Monarch himſelf is in good health, and will arrive on the eighteenth or the nineteenth at Berlin.

I learn, at the ſame time, that Count Finckenſtein is dying of an inflammation of the lungs, with which he was ſeized after a very warm altercation, with Count Hertzberg, on the ſubject of Holland. His life is deſpaired of, and his loſs to us

will be very great; as well becauſe he was abſolutely ours, as becauſe that, being a temporiſer by nature, he would have acted as the moderator of Prince Henry. He would alſo have directed the conduct of Mademoiſelle Voſs, after the fall of virtue; and finally becauſe Hertzberg will no longer have any counterpoiſe. With reſpect to the latter point however, I am not averſe to ſuppoſe that the time when this preſumptuous man ſhall be in abſolute diſcredit may but be the more quickly accelerated. Yet, not to mention the ſterility of ſubjects by which this epocha may be retarded, who ſhall anſwer that a man ſo violent, and wholly imbued as he is with the hatred which the Germans in general bear the French, will not venture to make ſome very deciſive falſe ſteps?

The Duke of York arrived here this evening, and had he been the Emperor he could not have been treated with more reſpect, eſpecially by the Dutcheſs and the courtiers. She indeed is wholly Engliſh, as well in her inclinations and her principles as in her manners; in ſo much that her

her almoſt cynical independence, oppoſed to the etiquette of the courts of German Princes, forms the moſt ſingular contraſt I know. I do not however believe that there is any queſtion concerning the marriage of the Princeſs Caroline, who is a moſt amiable, lively, playful, witty, and handſome lady; the Duke of York, a puiſſant hunter, a potent drinker, an indefatigable laugher, deſtitute of breeding and politeneſs, and who poſſeſſes, at leaſt in appearance, much of the Duke de Lauſun, as well in mind as in perſon, is inſpired with a kind of paſſion for a woman married to a jealous huſband, who torments him, and will not ſuffer him to fix his quarters. I know not whether he will go to Berlin. The verſions relative to him are various. Some affirm that, after having been an unbridled libertine, he feels a returning (*x*) deſire of doing

(*x*) The attention this young Prince at preſent pays to his public duties, civil and military, and the independent firmneſs with which his public conduct has ſo recently been ſtamped, are the beſt commentary to this text. T.

his

his duty. For my own part I find in him all the ſtiffneſs of a German Prince, with a double doſe of Engliſh inſolence, but wanting the free cordiality of that nation.

LETTER XXXVI.

Brunſwick, October 27th, 1786.

I HERE ſend you the continuation and concluſion of the preceding diſpatch, to which I add the tranſlation of a pamphlet, the ſingularity of which is increaſed by having appeared at Vienna, with the permiſſion of the Emperor; who, to the communication made by the cenſor, has added theſe very words—"Let this paſs among "others."

This is but a trifle compared to that caprice which three days afterward induced him to releaſe the unfortunate Szekely, whom the moſt powerful remonſtrances could not ſave, and whoſe cauſe is here (*y*) ill enough defended. For what concluſions might he not have drawn from the

(*y*) By the word *here*, the author means in the pamphlet, to which the reader will immediately come. T.

con-

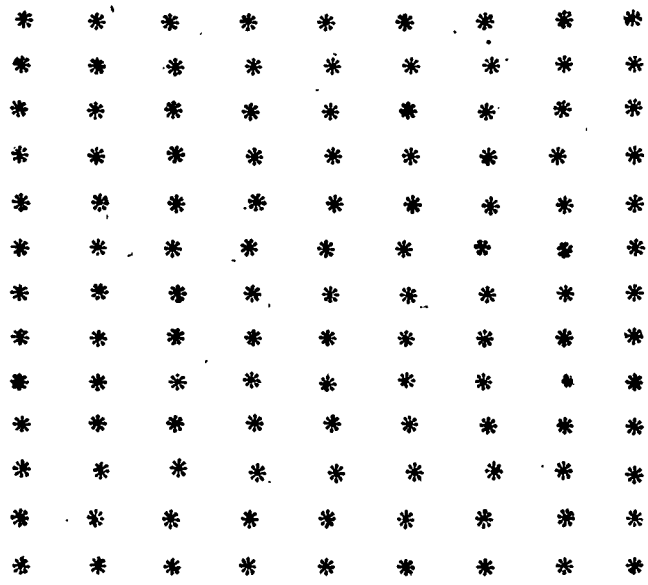
confidence with which he imparted to the emperor the ſituation of his accounts, from the diſorder by which they had been brought into this ſtate, from the ardent ſupplications he made him to purchaſe for the public a well-tried chymical ſecret, at ſuch a price as would have compleated the deficiency in his accounts (I ſay compleated, for Szekely and his family had paid the greateſt part of the deficiencies) and from the anſwer of the Emperor himſelf. —"Do you addreſs yourſelf to me as to a "friend, or as to the Emperor? If to the "former, I cannot be the friend of a man "who has not been faithful to his truſt. "If as Emperor, I would adviſe you to go "in perſon and make your declaration to "the courts of juſtice."

This fact, which I have learnt ſince my arrival at Berlin, attended with the moſt aggravating circumſtances, is one of the moſt odious I can recollect, yet might I relate fifty of the ſame ſpecies. * * *

* * * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * *



Free

Free Obſervations on the Crime and Puniſhment of Lieutenant-Colonel SZEKELY, *of the Guards, by a Friend of Truth,* 1786.

LET the voice of truth be heard, let her at preſent be ſeen without diſguiſe, without veil, in all her awful nakedneſs. Hear ye incorrupt (z) judges, I am about to ſpeak of the crime and puniſhment of Szekely. My heart melts, but my words ſhall be impartial. Hear and pronounce

(z) From the life of Baron Trenck, from the preſent fact, and from numerous others, it appears that the appeal and the apoſtrophe are abſurd. Trenck informs us that his judges, after having held their offices for a ſucceſſion of years, were at laſt condemned to be the common ſcavengers of Vienna. The picture he gives of their intrigues, their corruption, and their vices, is beyond conception horrible. How can man dare to vaunt of the wiſdom of the age, which has not yet diſcovered that juſtice, in its moſt extenſive ſenſe, is the moſt neceſſary as well as the ſublimeſt attribute of man? T.

ſentence

ſentence on me, on Szekely, and on thoſe who pronounced ſentence on him.

Szekely announces a deficiency in the regimental cheſt of the guards, and the diſorder of his accounts; and after ſome pretended examinations is brought before the council of war. Ninety-ſeven thouſand florins of the empire have diſappeared; but Szekely had placed his whole confidence in the Sieur Lakner, who is deceaſed, and who was the only keeper of the keys of the cheſt. Szekely had more than once declared that he himſelf was a very improper perſon to have pecuniary matters committed to his charge, and that he never had reviſed nor verified the accounts of the regimental cheſt confided to his care. He therefore cannot be ſuſpected of perſonal fraud, eſpecially when his regiment renders juſtice to the goodneſs of his manners, and unanimouſly points out the caſhier Lakner, as a perſon who was debaſed by meanneſſes, and rendered ſuſpicious by incurring expences infinitely above his fortune.

This

This it is very true was an exceedingly culpable negligence, but ſuch was the only crime of Szekely; and it was for this reaſon that the council of war condemned him to be impriſoned ſix years in a fortreſs. The puniſhment was doubtleſs in itſelf ſufficient, ſince Szekely, in effect, and according to the language of the civilians was—*Nec confeſſus nec convictus*—of any prevarication; yet was it aggravated by the Aulic (*a*) council of war, which was commanded to make a reviſion of the proceſs, and which increaſed his detention to a duration of eight years. Was this tribunal ignorant then that it is a cuſtom with our *moſt gracious* Monarch himſelf to increaſe the ſeverity of all ſentences pronounced againſt criminals? Let us therefore believe that the judges, on this occaſion, were only obedient to the rigor of the laws; but the after deciſion of the Emperor will moſt aſſuredly appear inconceivable. The following is the judgment

(*a*) We cannot find a better parallel to this *Aulic* council than our formerly infamous court of Star-Chamber. T.

which this Monarch uttered—Yes! Uttered, yet did not bluſh!——

"Szekely muſt without heſitation be "broken, declared incapable of military "ſervice, and delivered over to the civil "officer, who ſhall convey him to the "place where the crime was committed in "Vienna, where he ſhall ſtand in the pil-"lory for three ſucceſſive days, and re-"main two hours, each day, on a ſcaffold, "in the high market-place, that his ex-"ample may be of public utility.—As a "favour, and in conſequence of his age, "I limit the eight years impriſonment to "which he is condemned to four, during "which he ſhall be confined at Segedin, a "penal priſon of the civil power of the "Hungarian ſtates, where he ſhall receive "the ſame allowance for food as is grant-"ed to other criminals."

The court of juſtice made remonſtrances to the Emperor, in which it proved that the puniſhment was much too ſevere, and entirely contrary to law and to equity; but the Emperor continued

tinued inflexible, and thus confirmed his ſentence——

" All ſuperintendants of military cheſts " might, like Szekely, plead that they " knew not what was become of the mo- " ney, even though it ſhould have been " ſtolen by themſelves. Whenever there " is a deficiency in any cheſt, and eſpecially " of a ſum ſo conſiderable as ninety-ſeven " thouſand florins, there is no neceſſity " for the judge to prove that the money " has been taken by the accuſed perſon, " but the accuſed perſon muſt ſhew that " it has not been taken by him; and " whenever he cannot demonſtrate this he " himſelf is the thief.—As ſoon as Szekely " ſhall have been broken, and ſhall be no " longer an officer, the ſentence againſt " him ſhall be put in execution, and a " paper ſhall be fixed round his neck, on " which ſhall be written—AN UNFAITH- " FUL STEWARD."

Let us take an attentive retroſpect of theſe ſupreme deciſions.

Szekely is puniſhable for having been exceedingly negligent; he is the ſame for having beſtowed his whole confidence on a diſhoneſt caſhier, of whoſe pompous luxury he could not be ignorant, ſince it gave offence to the whole corps of the guards. It was eaſy to conclude that ſuch a man could not live at an expence ſo great on his paternal income. It is even probable that Szekely himſelf, perceiving the diſorder of his accounts, and the deficiency in his cheſt, and terrified by the infamy and puniſhment inflicted on ſuch crimes, ſacrificed much to alchemy and the occult ſciences, in the hope of making gold, and of thus freeing himſelf from his embarraſſments. This no doubt was a folly at which all men of ſenſe would grieve; it is not however the leſs poſſible. It is certain that the love of chymiſtry was the ruling paſſion of Szekely, and that he indulged his inclinations the more becauſe he expected ſome time thus to recover his loſſes. To this excuſe let us add the extreme ignorance of which he accuſed himſelf in all that related to pecuniary affairs.

True

True it is that, with ſuch a conviction of his own incapacity, he never ought to have taken charge of a regimental cheſt; but were all thoſe who are in poſſeſſion of places, the duties of which are beyond their abilities, obliged to abdicate them, what vaſt deſerts would our public offices afford! Rabner encourages three different ſpecies of men (*b*), by ſaying—"On whom God "beſtows an office he alſo beſtows a ſuffi- "cient degree of underſtanding for the ex- "erciſe of that office."—Szekely would not indubitably have adopted this opinion, could he have foreſeen the evil conſequences of his preſumption.

Was not that flattering letter which was addreſſed to him by Maria Thereſa, of glorious memory, in which, while ſhe gave the higheſt praiſes to his probity and loyalty, this auguſt Sovereign confided to his care, without any precaution, the regimental cheſt of the guards, an authentic teſtimony in behalf of his honour? Has it been meant by the forgetfulneſs of this

(*b*) I know not why three different ſpecies, or what three: I can but follow my author. T.

diſtinction to add a new outrage to all the ingratitudes with which ſome have ſullied themſelves, relative to this immortal Empreſs? Was it intended to tax her with that levity, that ſilly credulity, which blind confidence produces? Alas! In deſpite of all the defects which envy ſo gratuitouſly imputes to her, Maria Thereſa never was ſurrounded by ſuch an army of knaves as thoſe from whom all the rigor of the preſent Sovereign cannot preſerve us. So true is it that gentleneſs and love, from a Prince toward his ſubjects, are more efficacious means, to preſerve them within the bounds of duty, than all the violent acts tyranny can commit.

I return to Szekely and affirm—it is impoſſible that this letter from the Empreſs Queen, though in ſome ſort the pledge of the fidelity of Szekely, can ſerve as an excuſe to the Prince of Eſterhazy, whoſe perſonal negligence cannot be juſtified. Did not his right, as chief of the guards, impoſe it on him as a law to examine the regimental cheſt of Szekely? And

is

is not ſuch an infraction of the duties of his place moſt reprehenſible?

Still leſs can be offered in defence of the fault committed by the Hungaro-Tranſylvanian chancery; ſince, according to its inſtructions, it was in like manner bound to inſpect the adminiſtration of Szekely. But none of the acts of this ſuperior court ought to inſpire aſtoniſhment, ſince it is no longer diſtinguiſhed, except by diſorder and ill faith; ſince its reſponſibility is no longer any thing but a word; and ſince its ideas of exact calculation, and of receipt and expence are exactly as juſt as thoſe of Brambille (*c*) are on phyſic.

Judges, ye have condemned Szekely—Be it ſo—Act worthy of your office. Pu-

(*c*) This Brambille is firſt ſurgeon to the Emperor, by whom he has been ennobled, and who has made him inſpector of the medical and chirurgical academies. He is ſaid to be an ignorant quack, and a violent ſatire has lately been written againſt him, which if report ſpeak truth is very pleaſant. This ſatire has been licenſed and publicly ſold at Vienna, which is another ſingular fact, and tends to prove that paſquinades will be much rather ſuffered, in Auſtria, than inſtructive and free works.

niſh his ſuperintendants alſo, who have by a nonperformance of their duty placed him on the brink of that abyſs into which you headlong plunged him, without humanity, and void of ſhame.

The Kings of Europe have all reſerved to themſelves the moſt benevolent of prerogatives; that of pardoning the guilty, or of ſoftening the pains the ſentence inflicts by which they are condemned. Joſeph alone perſiſts in other principles, more conformable to the feelings of his heart. He aggravates the puniſhment of the wretched. Alas! this no doubt is but to enjoy the extatic pleaſure of terrifying his people, by the exerciſe of the moſt unlimited deſpotiſm. Unfortunate Szekely! Ill-ſtarred man! I pity thee. Thou falleſt a victim to the ſplenetic temper of the Monarch! Perhaps, at the very inſtant when he pronounced thy doom, a troubleſome fly ſtung his brow, and thy diſhonour was his vengeance. Deplorable ſacrifice of a tyrannical and barbarous heart, yes, I pity thee! Men of worth, men of juſtice, what muſt the Monarch be who can

add

add to the rigor of the Judge?—A tyrant! —What can the Monarch be who tramples under foot the rights of humanity?—A tyrant!!—What can the Monarch be who can make the laws and the juſtice of his kingdom his ſport?—A tyrant!!!—What can the Monarch be who in criminal deciſions ſhall act only according to his caprice?—A Joſeph!!!!

A Joſeph!—Oh God! Great God! What then is man? A poor and feeble creature, whom an imperious oppreſſor may at any moment reduce to duſt; or may rend his heart, extort his laſt ſigh, by the ſeven thouſand raging torments, which the Hydra with ſeven thouſand heads in ſport inflicts.

Dreadful image! Ignominious to humanity, yet wofully true, wofully exact, wofully confirmed by experience!—Does not a Sovereign who increaſes the rigor of ſentences openly proclaim—"Ye Judges, "whom I have appointed to judge ac-"cording to law and equity, ye are preva-"ricators; ye have betrayed your truſt, "falſified your conſciences, and have en-

"deavoured

" deavoured to practiſe deceit upon me?" —Such magiſtrates therefore ought not to be continued in office; for, to ſuffer them ſtill to be Judges is to approve their conduct, and confirm their judgment. But, deſtructive as the thunderbolt, the Monarch, addreſſing them, exclaims—" Your " ſentence is too mild! It is my will " arbitrarily to increaſe puniſhment, that " I may prove myſelf the maſter of life " and death!"—What language, Oh God! from the mouth of a King whom thou haſt appointed to be our protector, and not our tyrant!

Szekely would never have been condemned, had he not been intimately connected with the Freemaſons. When the Emperor pronounced ſentence againſt this unfortunate man, he forgot himſelf ſo far as to ſay,—" I will let thoſe gentry (the " Freemaſons) underſtand there is no effi- " cacy in their protection."

Where then is the equity of a Monarch who thus proſtitutes the power he is in poſſeſſion of, to the deſtruction of one of the members of a ſociety which he deteſts? Who

Who would not ſmile contemptuouſly at the poor malice of a peaſant who ſhould go in ſearch of his neighbour, after twilight, that he might unſeen give him a fillip on the noſe, run away, and divert himſelf with having played him ſo cunning a trick.—Oh Juſtice! Juſtice! Shalt thou forever have eyes that thou may'ſt not ſee?

Yes, debaſed, corrupted was the mouth which increaſed the rigor of the ſentence of Szekely, who previouſly had been deſtined to languiſh eight years in priſon. —Joſeph has diminiſhed the term of his detention. And are theſe then thy favours, ſceptred executioner? Yes, this favour granted to a man of quality, who was for three ſucceſſive days expoſed in the pillory, reſembles that which a criminal, condemned to the gallows, ſhould receive from thee, whom thou ſhouldſt permit to be racked upon the wheel, becauſe he was too feeble to mount the ladder.

Couldſt thou have ſurvived the ſhame of ſuch a crime, had not thy people themſelves applauded thy fury? The curioſity, with

with which all Vienna enjoyed the ſpectacle the wretched Szekely afforded, proves that the manners of thy ſubjects already partake of thy own barbarity. But let them tremble, ſlaves as they are, bowed beneath the yoke! A new Nero promiſes new crimes, new horrors!

LETTER XXXVII.

Brunſwick, October 18th, 1786.

I FEAR there are ſome waverings in the mind of the King, relative to Holland; for the Duke, after the arrival of his courier, and receiving information of the danger of Count Finckenſtein, again ſpoke to me on the ſubject, with a degree of inquietude which was far from diſſembled. The following were his proper words.—"Holland will certainly occaſion a war, "eſpecially ſhould the death of the Elec-"tor of Bavaria intervene; do you act "therefore as mediators to ſmother the "riſing flames.—Come, come, the Stadt-"holder muſt have a council, without "which he can perform nothing; and "how ſhall this council be ſelected?"

I replied to the Duke, that I was not ſufficiently acquainted with thoſe affairs to give any opinion on the ſubject, but that I was

I was going to make him a propoſition which he muſt only regard as ideal, and coming from myſelf, although it might by no means be impracticable.—

" Now that I know how far I can de-
" pend upon your prudence and your prin-
" ples," continued I, " I am certain that
" you will ſee the affairs and the conduct
" of the Stadtholder in their true light;
" that you will not imagine friendſhip in
" politics can have any other baſis than
" intereſt; or that we ought to renounce
" our alliance with Holland, in order that
" the Princeſs of Orange may nightly en-
" joy more agreeable dreams; that you
" cannot but comprehend how much it is
" impoſſible for us to place any confidence
" in Count Hertzberg, who, relative to us,
" is frenetic, and how much our diſtruſt
" may be increaſed, ſhould our ſole coun-
" terpoiſe to this violent miniſter diſap-
" pear, by the death of Count Fincken-
" ſtein. I ſhall therefore, thus far, wil-
" lingly ſtep forward to ſay that, it ap-
" pears to me very probable, France will
" be inclined to treat on this affair with

" you

" you ſingly, ſhould the King of Pruſſia
" conſent that you ſhould be ſolely truſted
" with the buſineſs on his behalf; and,
" as I may ſay, ſhould you be made arbi-
" trator. I feel how important it is, to
" you, to us, and to all, that you ſhould
" not endanger yourſelf in the opinion of
" his Majeſty. There are already but too
" many cauſes of diſtance exiſting between
" you, and the country is entirely loſt if
" the neceſſities of the times do not oblige
" you to take the helm. But, ſhould you
" find the criſis ſo alarming as to dread
" deciſive events ſhould be the conſequence,
" it appears to me that then it will no
" longer be proper to keep beating againſt
" the wind. For, if the King of Pruſſia
" be fated to commit irreparable faults, it
" would be as well for all parties that he
" ſhould begin to-morrow, in order that
" we might the ſooner augur what his
" reign ſhall be, and chuſe our ſides in
" conſequence. It is for you therefore to
" know in what degree of favour you are
" with the King. He cannot love you;
" for never yet did the weak man love the
" ſtrong.

" ſtrong.. He cannot deſire you ſhould be
" his miniſter; for never yet did a vain
" and dark man deſire to poſſeſs one who
" was himſelf illuſtrious and luminous.
" But it is neither his friendſhip nor his
" inclination that are neceſſary to you; it
" is power. You ought to acquire that
" aſcendancy over him which a grand cha-
" racter, and a vaſt genius, may ever ac-
" quire over a confined underſtanding,
" and an unſtable mind. If you have
" enough of this aſcendency to inſpire him
" with fears for his ſituation; to convince
" him that he is already betrayed to dan-
" ger; that the ſending of Goertz, in your
" deſpite (or rather without your know-
" ledge, for you were not then at Berlin) is
" a blunder of magnitude, which has been
" committed without poſſeſſing the leaſt
" pledge of docility on the part of the
" Stadtholder; that the inconſiderate let-
" ters of Hertzberg form another equal
" blunder; that this miniſter purſues his
" *perſonal intereſts*, and thoſe only, at the
" hazard of depriving his maſter of *per-*
" *ſonal reſpect*, even from the commence-
" ment

" ment of his reign; ſince it is very evi-
" dent that, if he perſiſt in his thought-
" leſs interference (be ſuppoſitions as fa-
" vourable, nay almoſt as romantic, as
" you pleaſe) he will only have played the
" cards of the Engliſh, although they have
" ſpoilt their own game—if you can make
" him ſenſible of all this, you will eaſily
" be able to perſuade him that he will but
" be too fortunate in accepting your me-
" diation. And, although mediation is
" not exactly the phraſe which may be
" employed, becauſe that it does not ex-
" actly ſquare with the rule of proportion;
" ſuch is the eſteem in which you are held
" by the cabinet of Verſailles that, ſhould
" this negociation once be committed to
" your care, all difficulties will vaniſh
" of themſelves. Such a meaſure there-
" fore would have the double advantage
" of accommodating the affair, which you
" regard as the brand of diſcord, and of
" teaching the King to feel that he pre-
" ſumes too much, if he imagines that, by
" the ſole magic of the abrupt and *tudeſ-*

" *can* (*d*) French of Count Hertzberg; he
" will be able to preſerve the ſame reſpect
" for his court which a ſucceſſion of great
" acts, heroical proſperity, vigilant activi-
" ty, and perſeverance, even to a miracle,
" for forty-ſix years, have procured it;
" that he has need of a man, whoſe name
" abroad, and whoſe influence at home,
" ſhould attract confidence, and ſerve as
" the key-ſtone to an arch, which, accord-
" ing to its dimenſions, has but little ſoli-
" dity; or, to ſpeak without a metaphor,
" a kingdom ill ſituated, ill conſtituted, ill
" governed, and which poſſeſſes no real
" ſtrength, except in opinion; ſince its
" military poſition is wretched, and its re-
" ſources precarious. For, with reſpect
" to the treaſury, it will vaniſh, if a hand
" of iron, yet not a hand of avarice,
" ſhould not guard it; and, as to an army,
" who can be more convinced than you
" are that years ſcarcely are ſufficient for
" its formation; but that ſix months of

(*d*) *German.* T.

" relaxed

" relaxed diſcipline may degrade it ſo that " it ſhall no longer be cogniſable ?"

This diſcourſe, which fixed the attention of the Duke, and which was particularly intended to divine what he himſelf imagined he might be able to accompliſh and what he might become, appeared to produce a very great effect. Inſtead of beginning, as he always does, by ambiguous and dilatory phraſes, which may ſerve any purpoſe he ſhall pleaſe, he immediately entered into the ſpirit of my diſcourſe, and after having felt and owned, with an effuſion of heart and a penetrating tone, that I preſented him a proſpect of the greateſt honour his imagination could conceive, and which he ſhould prefer to the gaining of ſix victories, he joined with me in endeavouring to find ſome means of making the overture to the King.

" I do not imagine," ſaid he, " my " ſituation will authoriſe the attempt with- " out previous meaſures. I am more " afraid of injuring the cauſe than of in- " juring myſelf; but it is certainly ne- " ceſſary the project ſhould be conveyed

" to him; and, ſhould he afford the leaſt " opportunity, I will explain every thing. " Cannot you ſpeak to Count Fincken- " ſtein, ſhould he recover?"

' No, for he ſtrictly confines himſelf to ' his department. Neither is this any ' thing more than an idea of my own, ' and of ſmall diplomatic value, ſince I ' have no credentials.'

" You have but few opportunities of " ſpeaking in private to Welner?"

' Very few. Beſide, how can that man ' ever be devoted to you? He determines ' to act the principal part himſelf. He is ' induſtrious for his own intereſt, being ' very ſenſible that, becauſe of his obſcu- ' rity, he has an immenſe advantage over ' you. Not to mention that he is the in- ' timate friend of your brother, who does ' not wiſh your company at Berlin.'

In fact this brother hates the Duke, by whom he is deſpiſed, and hopes for favour and influence under the reign of myſti- ciſm.

We had proceeded thus far in our diſ- courſe when the whole court, leaving the opera

opera for ſupper, and the Duke of York, by entering without any precurſor, obliged us to break off. He has appointed to meet me this morning, the day of my departure, at nine o'clock, and to him I am now going.

The Duke, as I expected, was ſhaken to-day, in his reſolution of having himſelf named to the King. I ſay as I expected, for his brilliant imagination and ambitious energy eaſily catch fire at his firſt emotions, although he ſhould betray no exterior ſymptoms except thoſe of tranquility. But the rein he has ſo long put upon his paſſions, which he has eternally had under command, and in which habit he has been moſt perſevering, reconducts him to the heſitation of experience, and to that ſuper-abundant circumſpection which his great diffidence of mankind, and his foible, I mean his dread of loſing his reputation, inceſſantly inſpire. He made a circumſtantial diſplay of the delicacy with which the petty glory, or, to ſpeak plainly ſaid

he, the vain glory, of the King muſt be managed.

Taking up the converſation at the point where we had left it, he aſſured me that, with reſpect to Welner, I was deceived; that he was one of the perſons in Berlin on whom he depended, and who rather wiſhed to ſee him in power than any other; that I might eaſily ſpeak with him at the houſe of Moulinès (His reſident, an artful man, but too oſtenſibly artful; ready to ſerve that he may better perform his office of ſpy, but proffering his ſervices with too much facility; appointed to take part in the education of the Prince of Pruſſia, but hitherto without any title; a deſerter from Prince Henry, ſince it has become pretty evident the Prince will never be in power; inclined to ſerve France, in general, and indeed too viſibly, for he is ſtiled the privy counſellor of Count d'Eſt**, but in his heart ſolely attached to himſelf.) that Welner goes there very often; that he certainly would not ſpeak openly, at firſt, but that he would at length repeat whatever I ſhould ſay to the King.

The

The Duke often reiterated that he thought it uſeleſs and dangerous for him to be named; and in fine, although with difficulty, and as I may ſay againſt his inclination, he gave me the true reaſon. In a fortnight he was to be at Berlin, or perhaps ſooner; for (take particular notice of what follows) IT APPEARS THAT THE HOPE AFFORDED BY SIR JAMES HARRIS (the Engliſh ambaſſador at the Hague) OF A POWERFUL AND EFFICACIOUS SUCCOUR, SHOULD THE KING OF PRUSSIA RESOLVE, WITH AN ARMED FORCE, TO CREATE HIMSELF UMPIRE OF THE AFFAIRS OF HOLLAND, HAS INSPIRED THE KING WITH A WISH TO CONFER WITH HIS SERVANTS. I literally repeat the words the Duke pronounced, who fixed his eyes upon me, but whom I defy not only to have obſerved the leaſt trait of emotion in my countenance, but ſtill more not to have been ſtruck with a ſmile, almoſt imperceptible and very ironical, as if I had known and contemned the fact? My only reply at the end of his ſentence was, ſhrugging up my ſhoulders——

" There is little need I ſhould remark " to you, my Lord, that the conqueſt " which Louis XIV, Turenne, Condé, " Luxembourg, Louvois, and two hun- " dred thouſand French, could not make " of Holland, will never be effected by " Pruſſia, watched by the Emperor, on " that ſame country, now that it is ſup- " ported by France (*e*)."

The Duke therefore is going, or wiſhes to make us believe he is going, to Berlin; where deliberations are to be held on the propoſitions of England.

So be it.—So much the better. Do not be alarmed. The Duke is rather German than Pruſſian, and as good a ſtateſman as he is a great warrior. He will prove ſuch a propoſition to be ſo abſurd that it is probably no more than the perſonal conception of the audacious and artful Harris, who wiſhes, at any expence, to make his fortune, and in a fit of madneſs to poniard his nation, which is more able than ſage.

(*e*) Here it muſt be confeſſed the traveller was a falſe prophet; but whether it was preciſely his fault ſtill remains to be enquired.

Still

Still however I think my journey to Brunſwick is a lucky accident; for I confeſs, and with great pleaſure, I found the principles of the Duke to be moderate, prudent, and, politically ſpeaking, wholly French. I depicted the affair, or rather affairs, as a whole, under new points of view; and if, as I perſiſt in believing, or rather as I have believed more ſtrongly, ſince I have known that he depends upon Welner for ſtrengthening his party, his meaſures have long been taken (For Welner has been a canon at Halberſtadt, where the regiment of the Duke remains.) if I ſay the neceſſity of accident ſhould oblige him to take the helm, I ſhall have acquired the greateſt advantages to treat with and make him a party in our deſigns.

He has deſired I would give Count d'Eſt** the very good advice, ſhould Count Finckenſtein die, or even ſhould he not, to demand to treat on the affairs of Holland, and on all that relates to them, immediately with his Majeſty. This is the moſt certain means of battering Hertzberg in breach, who certainly has been contro-

controverted with great firmneſs in theſe affairs by the King, and to obtain that which we ſhall ſeem only to expect from the judgment and perſonal will of the Monarch. It is a proceeding which is ſucceſsful with all Kings, even with the greateſt. Vanſwieten obtained from Frederick II. himſelf the moſt important conceſſions, by acting thus; and this is certainly a much more ſafe, as it is a more noble mode, than all the deceitful efforts which flattery can employ with Prince Henry, whoſe glaring protection is more injurious to the French embaſſy than it ever can be productive of good, under the moſt favourable of future contingencies. For I am not very unapt to believe, as the Duke affirms without diſguiſe, that this *partition Prince* (*f*) were he maſter of affairs, would be the moſt dangerous of

(*f*) *Ce Prince partageur:* alluding, no doubt, to the diſmemberment of Poland, in which he was as *laudably* active as the juſt, the philoſophic, the GREAT King, his brother, and from motives *equally pure*, as will be ſeen from the anecdote of the ſtatue, related in the ſecond volume. T.

the

the enemies of Germanic freedom.——I muſt conclude for I have not time to cypher: the remainder of this ineſtimable converſation will be ſent you hereafter. Inform me, with all poſſible expedition, how I ought to act under the preſent circumſtances, and be perſuaded that, if you can find any means whatever of giving me ſecret official credit with the King, or even with the Duke, you will act very wiſely.

Additional Note.

If you do not imagine I am totally doting, mark me. I conjure you to read, and cauſe this to be read, with the utmoſt attention; and not to ſuffer me to wait a ſingle moment for an anſwer; even though it ſhould be abſolutely neceſſary, for this purpoſe, to borrow ſome few hours from the levity of the country, or to be conſiſtent for a whole day together.

LETTER XXXVIII.

Berlin, October 21ſt, 1786.

I ARRIVED at half paſt five in the morning. The King was to exerciſe his cavalry at ſix. I immediately mounted my horſe, that I might diſcover the ſtate of his health, obſerve what aſpect he wore, and if poſſible to find ſome perſon to whom I might addreſs myſelf. His health is good, his brow cloudy; the troops were obliged to wait a conſiderable time, and after two charges he very abruptly and very ridiculouſly retired.—Nothing ſufficiently new or important has come to my knowledge, to prevent my employing the few remaining moments, before the departure of the courier, and which are greatly abridged by your eight pages of cyphers, in reſuming the conſequences which I have drawn from the very intereſting converſation, an account of which I gave

I gave you in my laſt diſpatch. It is impoſſible I ſhould ſend you a compleat and circumſtantial narrative of all that paſſed, becauſe that the Duke, an hour after I had left him, having ſent me his miniſter for foreign affairs (M. von Ardenſberg von Reventlau) I have too much to add.

Four particulars appeared to me evident.

I. That, during the confidential conference with the Duke, a great complication of ſenſation, emotion, and deſign was mingled. He wiſhes we ſhould aid him in becoming prime miniſter of Pruſſia; but that we ſhould act with caution. He is not convinced that we deſire to ſee him in that poſt (I did every thing in my power to perſuade him of it) yet, perfectly ſatisfied that any interference in the affairs of Holland would be a ſtupid error, he is anxious that Pruſſia ſhould act with propriety; and that, in this affair at leaſt, we ſhould acquire influence. He therefore, while he informed me, endeavoured to diſcover if I already had any information, and whether we were determined in the

purſuit of our projects. To the ſame purport were the after commentaries of Ardenberg, his deceptive confidences, and Gazette ſecrets; the recall not only of M. de Coetloury (g) but alſo of M. de Veirac; our deſertion of the patriotic party, &c. &c.—to all which particulars I replied with a ſmile.

II. That the great inquietude of the Duke ariſes from not knowing whether we are or are not Auſtrians; or whether we are merely ſo undecided on the ſubject as that the errors, or the cold diſtance, of the cabinet of Berlin will be ſufficient to induce us, at the hazard of all that can happen, to ſecond the Emperor in his deſigns againſt Germany. In my opinion, were the Duke freed from his apprehenſions on this very capital article, he would be French; for he is ſtrongly German,

(g) I dare not poſitively affirm, but I am almoſt certain this name ought to be ſpelt Couette-Toury; and that the perſon meant is the ſame who is mentioned in the ſecond volume (during the conference between the author and Baron Reede) as the confidential friend of M. de Calonne. T.

and

and the Engliſh can only ſet Germany in flames; we alone have the power of maintaining it in peace. Should his connexions with England appear to be ſtrengthened, it is but, as I think, becauſe he diſtruſts the deſtiny of Pruſſia; for he well knows that his Engliſh calculations are rather ſpecious than ſolid, and that the Pruſſian, though perhaps ſomewhat more ſubaltern, are much leſs hazardous.

III. He and his miniſter have ſo often demanded, and redemanded, on what baſis I imagined the pacification of Holland might be eſtabliſhed that I have ſuppoſed the Duke probably thinks, ſhould we exclude the Prince of Pruſſia from the Naſſau alliance, there might be a neceſſity of chuſing his daughter, the Princeſs Caroline of Brunſwick, as a conſort for the Pruſſian heir. The ſuppoſition is founded on circumſtances ſo fugitive that it is impoſſible to give them written evidence, or perhaps probable; eſpecially becauſe that, not having received any inſtructions on ſuch a ſubject, I have not dared to make any advances. I therefore only give it for

what

what it is worth. The being but little informed of the affairs of Holland has, in every reſpect, been highly injurious to me, on this occaſion. Might I have ſpoken more freely, I might even have drawn the well dry. The only poſitive propoſal which he made on the ſubject was a kind of coalition-council of regency, without which the Stadtholder could effect nothing, and in which ſhould be included Giſlaer, Vanberckel, &c. &c. &c. &c.; but among whom alſo muſt be ſeated M. Van Lynden; the governor of the children of the Stadtholder, &c. &c. To my eternal objection—"How will you ſupport thoſe "meaſures which ſhall be taken under the "pledge of your aid?"—he continually replied—'Should the Stadtholder counter-'act theſe arrangements, we will abandon 'him.'—"But how far?" I replied, "And, "if but amically, how will he be injured, "ſhould he be thus abandoned?"——In a word, I continued, with a kind of myſterious obſtinacy, to maintain that the Stadtholder would never be brought to reaſon, unleſs it ſhould be declared to him that the King

King of Pruſſia would forſake his party; though his conſort might be ſecretly informed ſuch was not the real intent.

IV. It appeared to me that the Duke was ruminating on ſome grand project for the reconſtruction of the Germanic edifice; for this able Prince perceives the antique ruinous building muſt be propped, in order to be preſerved; and even in many parts repaired. The ſole wiſh which he clearly teſtified was the ſeparation of the electorate of Hanover from the Engliſh monarchy, and the ſecularization of certain provinces, which might one day form an equivalent for Saxony. He ſuppoſes the firſt point might be gained, and even without any great difficulty, ſhould our politics become angliciſed; and that the ſecond might be accompliſhed, though contrary to the confederation of the Princes, becauſe at the death of the Elector of Mayence there will be an opportunity of retouching the league, as well as a natural and proper occaſion of coming to an explanation with the eccleſiaſtical Princes, who, more intereſted than any others in

the liberties of Germany, are always the firſt to tergiverſate, &c. &c. Hence we at leaſt may learn that however attached he may appear to be to the confederation, means may be found of inducing him to liſten to reaſon concerning modifications.

The inſtructions which are neceſſary for me at preſent, are——

I. Whether we ought on this occaſion to bring him on the ſtage, which would be the real means of driving him from it: and I certainly do not think the latter to be our intereſt; for he is more prudent, more able, and leſs ſuſceptible of prejudice and paſſion, than any other who can be made miniſter.

II. Whether his party ought to be encouraged and ſtrengthened, which will be to act directly contrary to the party of Prince Henry; for the plan of the Duke is excluſive; and to confeſs the truth, he appears tacitly ſo convinced that the Prince can effect nothing that he has greatly fortified my own opinion on this ſubject.

III. What is the degree of confidence I ought to place in him? For it is impoſſible

ble to obtain the confidence of, without placing confidence in, ſuch a man; and in my apprehenſion he had better be told than ſuffered to divine.

Count Finckenſtein is recovering.

The King arrived on the eighteenth, at eight in the morning, after having left Breſlaw, on the ſeventeenth, at ſeven in the morning. This was incredible diligence; no perſon could keep pace with him. He went, on the ſame day, to viſit the Queen Dowager, and thus gave occaſion to attribute the rapidity and danger of the journey to Mademoiſelle Voſs. She is ſaid to be pregnant; but, in the firſt place this cannot be known, and, in the ſecond, I do not believe the haſte would have been ſo great, had it been truth. According to report, ſhe has demanded two hundred thouſand crowns. Should this be ſo, the circle of her career will not be very ample.

The King made a multitude of nobles in Sileſia, as elſewhere. But, without loading my letter, the Gazettes will tell you enough of their names. He is to re-

main a week at Potſdam, which is to be dedicated to his military labours. Great changes in the army are ſpoken of, ſuch as will be favourable to the ſubalterns, and the reverſe to the captains.

The Dantzickers, who, according to appearances, ſuppoſed Kings were hobgoblins, were ſo enraptured to meet with one who did not eat their children that, in the exceſs of their enthuſiaſm, they were willing to put themſelves without reſtraint under the Pruſſian government. The magiſtrates eluded the folly of the populace as well as they could, under the pretence that Dantzick was dependent on Poland; but ſo great and ſo violent was the tumult that Pruſſian and Poliſh couriers were ſent off. This event will no doubt rouze the Emperor and Ruſſia; a favourable circumſtance to our affairs in Holland.

Count Hertzberg, who has indulged himſelf in very headlong acts in Sileſia, and particularly in his diſcourſe on the day of homage, in which he really braved the Emperor in a very indecent manner, as if it was not in his nature to accommodate

himſelf to a peaceable order of affairs; Hertzberg, I ſay, has had the influence to retard the nomination of Alvenſleben, for the French embaſſy, which had been announced by the King at ſupper. How might I have expected to be thus deceived, ſince, when I ſent you the intelligence, I ſuppoſed it to be an affair ſo public that I did not even write it in cypher?

LETTER XXXIX.

October 24th, 1786.

I SHALL begin my diſpatch with an anecdote, the truth of which is undoubted, and which appears to me the moſt deciſive of all I have learnt concerning the new reign. Recollect that, in Number XVIII, Auguſt 29, I wrote,

" The King apparently intends to renounce all his old habits. This is a proud undertaking.—He retires before ten in the evening, and riſes at four.—Should he perſevere, he will afford a ſingular example of habits of thirty years being vanquiſhed. This will be an indubitable proof of a grand character, and ſhew how we have all been miſtaken."—

When I ſpoke thus, I, like the reſt of the world, judged by appearances. The truth is that at half after nine the King diſappeared, and was ſuppoſed to be gone to reſt;

reſt; whereas, in the moſt retired apartments of the palace, like another Sardanapalus, he held his orgies till night was far advanced. Hence it is eaſy to underſtand why hours of buſineſs were obliged to be inverted. Health would not allow him to be equally active upon the ſtage and behind the ſcenes. * * * * *

* * * * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * * *

Prince Henry regards himſelf as kept at a diſtance as well from ſyſtem as from inclination. He is, or believes himſelf to be, perſuaded that the innumerable follies which will reſult from his abſence, for in his opinion the country without his aid is undone, will occaſion recourſe to be had to his experience and his abilities, and he then intends to refuſe that tardy ſuccour which his genius will be implored to yield. Even granting him the truth of all theſe vain dreams, he does not recollect that the expreſſion of an undone country is only true relative to a certain lapſe of time, and that therefore, in all probability, he will be dead before the want of his aſſiſtance will

be perceived. He comes to reſide four months at Berlin; there, according to him, to ſuffer martyrdom, that it may not be ſuppoſed he has deſerted the public cauſe. His places of aſylum are afterward to be Rheinſberg, the Lake of Geneva, and France; but ſuch he will eaſily find every where. Conſolation will not be wanting to him, ſince conſolation can be found at playing at blind man's-buff, or hot-cockles, with actreſſes more inſipid than the very worſt of our provincial companies can afford.

The diſtribution of influence continues the ſame. Hertzberg violently ſeizes on the King, who probably has more eſteem for Count Finckenſtein; but whom, not being ſo eternally hunted by him, he leaves in a ſubaltern degree of credit, which from apparent may become real, the eaſy temper of the maſter conſidered. The remaining miniſters are held to be ſo many cyphers.

Welner daily increaſes his juriſdiction, and Biſhopſwerder his influence, but he does not appear to exerciſe this influence either as a man of oſtentation or a dupe.

He

He neither aſks for titles, ribbands, nor places. At moſt he will but make miniſters; he will never be one. Three hundred thouſand livres (twelve thouſand five hundred pounds ſterling) for each of his daughters, an excellent fief for himſelf, with military rank (he is ſaid to be a good officer) theſe are what he wiſhes, and theſe he moſt probably *will* obtain. In the mean time no perſon *has* any thing; neither he nor Welner nor Goertz who lives by borrowing.

Bowlet?—The influence of a maſon-engineer, and no other; for of no other is he capable.

Goltz the Tartar?—Artful, ſly, dexterous; perhaps ambitious, but very ſelfiſh and covetous. Money is his ruling paſſion, and money he will have. He will probably have the greateſt influence over military affairs, unleſs the Duke of Brunſwick ſhould take them to himſelf. The memorials relative to fortification are tranſmitted to him.

Colonel Wartenſleben is evidently kept at a diſtance, and probably becauſe of his family

family connexions with Prince Henry; who, to all his other diſadvantages, adds that of having every perſon who is about the King for his enemy.

Subalterns?—Their kingdom is not come. It ſhould ſeem that having long, while Prince of Pruſſia, been deceived by them, the King knows and recollects this; although from compaſſion he wiſhes not to notice it, at leaſt for a time.

The maſter?—What is he?—I perſiſt in believing it would be raſh, at preſent, to pronounce; though one might be ſtrongly tempted to reply *King Log*. No underſtanding, no fortitude, no conſiſtency, no induſtry; in his pleaſures the Hog of Epicurus (*b*) and the hero only of pride; which perhaps we ſhould rather denominate confined and vulgar vanity.—Such hitherto have the ſymptoms been. And under what circumſtances, in what an age, and at what a poſt? I am obliged to ſummon all my reaſon to divine, and to forget it all again to hope. The thing

(*b*) *Epicuri de grege porcum.* HOR. T.

which is really to be feared is leſt the univerſal contempt he muſt ſoon incur ſhould irritate him, and deprive him of that ſpecies of benevolence of which he ſhews ſigns. That weakneſs is very formidable which unites an ardent thirſt after pleaſures, deſtitute of choice or delicacy, with the deſire of keeping them ſecret, in a ſituation where nothing can be kept ſecret.

Not that I here am writing a ſecond part to Madame de Sévigné; I do not ſpeak ill of Frederick William becauſe he overlooks me, as ſhe ſpoke well of Louis XIV, becauſe he had lately danced a minuet with her.

Yeſterday, at the court of the Queen, he three times addreſſed himſelf to me, which he never before did in public.—— "You have been at Magdeburg and Brunſ- "wick."—'Yes Sire.'—"Were you "pleaſed with the manœuvres?"—'Sire, 'I was in admiration.'—"I aſk to be in- "formed of the truth, and not to be "complimented."—'In my opinion, Sire, 'there was nothing wanting to compleat

'the

'the ſplendor of this exhibition, except 'the preſence of your Majeſty.'—" Is the " Duke in good health?"—'Exceedingly 'good, Sire.'—" Will he be here ſoon?"—'Your Majeſty, I imagine, is the only 'perſon who knows.'—He ſmiled.

This is a ſpecimen. You will well imagine it was perſonally very indifferent to me what he ſhould ſay to me, before the whole court, but it was not ſo to the audience; and I note this as having appeared to make a part of the arranged reparation to France, which reparation was as follows. (From this imagine the wit of the court of Berlin; for I am convinced there was a real deſire of giving ſatisfaction to Count d'Eſt**.)

Firſt it was determined the Queen ſhould have a Lotto, and not a private party, in order that the company at her table might be the more numerous. After all the Princeſſes, Prince Henry, Prince Frederick of Brunſwick, and the Prince of Holſteinbeck, had been invited, and taken their places, Mademoiſelle Biſhopſwerder, the maid of honour, who regulated the party,

party, named Count d'Eſt**. The Queen then, perceiving Lord Dalrymple, beckoned him, and at the ſame moment deſired him to ſit down. The ambaſſadors of France and England were the only foreign miniſters that were of the party, ſo that Prince Reuſs and Romanzow were now excluded, as they before had appeared to have been favoured. It would be difficult to imagine any thing more aukward, or more inconſiſtent; and this increaſes my regret at remembering that Count d'Eſt** thought himſelf obliged to take offence on the firſt court day of the Queen; for, after the abſurdity of yeſterday, I can ſee no poſſible hope of reparation, which would not be ſlovenly daubing.

I am certain however that, far from wiſhing to wound, they were deſirous to heal; and, to treat the ſubject leſs petitely, I am perſuaded it is wrong to affirm the King hates the French. He hates nothing; he ſcarcely *loves* any thing. He has been told that he muſt become wholly German, in order to purſue a new and glorious track, and he deſcends to the level

of

of his nation, inſtead of deſiring to elevate his nation ſuperior to itſelf. His conduct is the reſult of the narrowneſs of his views. If he have a cordial diſlike to any thing, it is to men of wit; becauſe he imagines that, in their company, it is abſolutely requiſite he ſhould hear wit, and be himſelf a wit. He deſpairs of the one, and therefore hates the other. He has not yet learnt that men of wit only are the people who can appear not to poſſeſs wit. He ſeems to have made a determination to treat all perſons in an amicable manner, without haughtineſs or threat. The Stadtholder always receives two very different accounts from Berlin, and does not fail to believe that which flatters his ruling paſſion.

A mile from this place ſome very ſecret experiments are making on the artillery, which are confided to Major Tempelhoff. A ſmall number of ſuperior officers are admitted; captains are excluded. The ground is covered by tents, and guarded by ſentinels, night and day. I ſhall endeavour to learn the particulars.

I forgot

I forgot to write you word, from Brunſwick, that the Dutcheſs informed me the Prince of Wales was conſulting the moſt able civilians in Europe, to learn whether, by marrying a Catholic, the poſitive laws of England, the laws of any other nation, or the maxims of the civil laws of Europe, would diſinherit an heir, and particularly an Heir-Apparent. There appears to be much imprudence in this appeal of an Heir-Apparent from the opinions of Great Britain to thoſe of the civilians (*i*).

An anecdote leſs important, but perhaps more poignant, is that the Margrave of Baden-baden has ſent M. von Edelſheim here, as his complimentary envoy; the brother of one of his miniſters who is called the Choiſeul of Carlſruhe. The follow-

(*i*) The political conduct of the Prince appears to riſe with, and become equal to, political exigencies. There are ſtrong ſymptoms in his late behaviour of a fortitude that is equal to the glorious heroiſm of deſpiſing *ſelf*, when ſelf and the welfare of mankind are at warfare. Love, the crimes of which, if ſo crimes can be, are venial, has yielded to a leſs ſeductive but more noble paſſion. T.

ing

ing is the hiſtory of this complimentor, who has arrived long after all the others.

At a time when the prolific virtues of the father of the five royal children were held in doubt, there was a wiſh to beſtow a lover on a lady (the afterward divorced Queen, baniſhed to Stettin) who, had they not done ſo, would have made bold to have beſtowed one on herſelf. The care of chuſing was committed to the brothers of the Duke of Brunſwick. They deſcended a little too low, and in conſequence an eye was caſt on Edelſheim, who was publicly enough charged with this great work. He was afterward ſent to Paris, to execute another commiſſion (*k*) of which he acquitted himſelf ill. I have been aſſured he

(*k*) Frederick II, dreading the tedioufneſs of the propoſed congreſs at Augſburg, wiſhed to ſend a private emiſſary to ſound the court of France. For this purpoſe he choſe Edelſheim, as a perſon, according to the King's account, leaſt liable to ſuſpicion. The project of Frederick was to indemnify the King of Poland by robbing the eccleſiaſtical Princes of Germany. This the pious Lewis XV. rejected. Edelſheim returned with his anſwer to Frederick at Freyberg, whence he afterward

he was thrown into the Baſtille. On his return he was diſgraced, but afterward employed, and ſent to various courts of Germany, in 1778.—And this is the man whom, in his high wiſdom, the Margrave ſelected for his envoy to the King of Pruſſia. The Monarch himſelf, when he ſaw him, could not forbear laughing.

P. S. Yeſterday, at eleven in the morning, the King, hid in a grey coach, went alone to Mon-Bijou, where he remained an hour, whence he returned in a great

afterward departed for London, made his communications, and was once again ſent back to Paris, on pretence that he had left ſome of his travelling trunks there; and the Bailli de Froulay, the ambaſſador of the Knights of Malta, being perſuaded the French were effectually deſirous of peace, was, as he had been before, the mediator. The Bailli was deceived. The Duke de Choiſeul indecently enough threw Edelſheim into the Baſtille, in order to ſearch his papers, which however Edelſheim had taken care to ſecure. The emiſſary was releaſed on the morrow, but obliged to depart the kingdom, by the way of Turin. Such is the ſtory as related by the King, in Chapter XI. of the Seven Years War. T.

glow.—What does this mean? Is this the triumph of the lady Voſs? It is impoſſible at preſent to know. Neither has any thing tranſpired concerning the letters which M. von Calenberg has brought from the Stadtholder.

Muller and Landſberg, private ſecretaries of the cabinet, demanded their diſmiſſion with conſiderable chagrin; their ſervices not being apparently neceſſary, ſaid they, ſince they were not thought worthy of being inſtructed concerning the anſwers they had to return, and ſince the letters were ſent ready compoſed to the King. They remain in their places, and the accommodation was effected by Biſhopſwerder. It appears that he is in league with Welner againſt Hertzberg, which he does not take any great precautions to conceal. The King will not go to Potſdam to make the military arrangements before Friday, in order as it is ſuppoſed to give the Duke time to arrive. The attempting to account for all the caprices of Kings is a ſtrange kind of phrenzy.

LETTER XL.

October 28th, 1786.

I PASSED yeſterday evening with Prince Henry. The King had dedicated almoſt the whole afternoon of the day before to this palace; for, after having been with the Prince, he viſited the Princeſs, where he played, and drank tea with Mademoiſelle Voſs, among other ladies of honour. This kind of reconciliation with the Prince (which however is nothing more than a ſimple act of courteſy, as is evident from the ſucceeding viſit to the Princeſs, whom the Prince regards as his moſt cruel enemy) this reconciliation (which is nearly an accurate phraſe; for the coolneſs between them was very great) appears to be the political work of Welner, who wiſhes, in his ſtruggle againſt Hertzberg, if not the ſupport, at leaſt the neutrality of the Prince; and the hatred of this feeble mor-

tal is ſo blind in effect that, united with the hopes of his ambition, of which he is not eaſy to be cured, it was ſufficient to induce him once more meanly to offer his ſervices to the King, conſequently to caſt himſelf if poſſible to a greater diſtance. Not that he himſelf places any great dependance on this type of peace, which is the more ſuſpicious becauſe it happened on the eve of a ſucceeding fortnight's abſence, after which it will not be difficult to find pretences not to meet again for ſome time longer, ſhould the King think proper. But the Prince imagines his enemy dead, and he enjoys himſelf, and chuckles like a child, without recollecting that this is the very way to promote his reſurrection.

In reality Count Hertzberg appears to have caſt his own die. He had a tolerable run of ill luck in Sileſia: abrupt diſputes, contradictions, the chagrin of ſeeing the name of the brother of his former miſtreſs ſtruck off from the liſt of Counts, he ought, even while in Pruſſia, to have perceived that his ſounding ſpeeches gave no pleaſure. On the

the day of receiving homage, he read over the names of the Counts, and when he came to his own ſtopped, that the King, ſeated on his throne, might pronounce it himſelf; and the Monarch was malicious enough to remain ſilent, ſo that the inauguration of Count Hertzberg did not take place till the day after, and in the antichamber.

But what probably has occaſioned his downfal, if fallen he has, was his haughty behaviour to Welner, the leaſt forgetful of men, and who, amid his ambitious projects, needed no ſuch cauſe of rancour to occaſion him to hate and injure the miniſter. Hertzberg has made him wait for hours in his antichamber, has received and kept him ſtanding, ſpoken to him but a very ſhort time, and diſmiſſed him with airs which are only proper to give offence. Welner vowed his deſtruction, and he is ſeconded by Biſhopſwerder.

Such, at leaſt, are probabilities, according to every acceptation of the word influence; and I ſhould have divined them to-day from the very politeneſs of Hertz-

berg. He gave a grand dinner to foreigners, among whom for once Count d'Eſt** and myſelf were invited. His attention ſeemed all directed to us. Such proceedings are aukward and mean. This mixture of ſtiffneſs and twining is a ſtrange ſingularity by which half-formed characters ruin themſelves. Machiavel rightly affirms that—" all the evil in the world originates " in not being ſufficiently good, or ſuffi- " ciently wicked." Whether my conjectures are or are not true, ſtill it is certain Count Hertzberg has been very drily and poſitively forbidden all interference, direct or indirect, in the affairs of Holland, from which country Callenberg does not appear to have brought any remarkable intelligence. He is really come to obtain admiſſion into the Pruſſian ſervice, and his letters were only recommendatory.

It is not the influence of Hertzberg that prevents the recal of Thulemeyer, but that of Count Finckenſtein. The mother of the envoy has had a laſting and tender friendſhip for the Count; and indeed it was her huſband who procured the Count

a place in the miniſtry. In fact, it appears to me to be a matter of little moment, for the preſent, whether Thulemeyer ſhould or ſhould not be recalled. His embaſſy ended on the arrival of Goertz, nor do I believe he ſends any diſpatches.

The deſtiny of Launay was decided the day before yeſterday by a very ſevere letter. He is no longer allowed to act, and they only offer him a penſion of two thouſand crowns, to retire on, with the proviſo that he ſhall remain in the Pruſſian ſtates. It muſt be owned his eſtimate (*l*) is a chef-d'œuvre of egotiſm and folly, and that he might be compleatly refuted; although the memorial of the commiſſioners, who have undertaken his refutation, is a pitiable performance. He has proved two facts, the one of which is curious, and the other deciſive againſt his own adminiſtration. Firſt that, in the ſpace of nineteen years, he has brought into the King's coffers a ſurplus of forty-two millions ſix hundred and eighty-nine thouſand crowns of the empire (or upward of ſeven millions ſter-

(*l*) Compte rendu. T.

ling) excluſive of the fixed revenue, which annually amounted to five millions of crowns. What dreadful oppreſſion!—The ſecond that, the collecting of the cuſtoms is an annual expence of more than one million four hundred thouſand crowns (or near two hundred and fifty thouſand pounds ſterling) which, on a firſt view of the buſineſs to be tranſacted, and of local circumſtances, might at leaſt be reduced two thirds. But not one man is at this moment employed who appears to underſtand the elements of his profeſſion. It is a fact that they have not yet been able to make any general ſtatement of debtor and creditor, nor to claſs any ſingle branch of the revenue; ſo that there is not one object, not even the King's dinner, which is yet regulated.

This is a chaos, but it is a chaos at reſt. Finance, military, and civil, are each alike in a ſtate of ſtagnation; and ſuch a ſtate in general would indeed be better than the rage of governing too much, in a country with a fixed conſtitution, in which individual prudence might preponderate over

public

public folly. But men are here ſo accuſtomed to ſee their King active, or rather excluſively active; they are ſo little in the habit of doing what he leaves undone; though, having once iſſued his orders, they very well underſtand the art of deceiving him; they even think ſo little of laying any propoſals before him, that the ſtagnation is a real clog on the machine. But how injurious may this clog become in a kingdom which reſts on ſo brittle a baſis, though inhabited indeed by a people ſo tardy, ſo heavy, ſo unimpaſſioned, that it is ſcarcely poſſible a ſudden ſhock ſhould happen? The veſſel however muſt continue to ſink, more or leſs ſenſibly, if ſome pilot does not come on board, although ſhe will not ſuddenly founder.

Wait we muſt: it would be an act of temerity to attempt to look into this darkneſs viſible. I repeat we muſt wait before we can know whether the King will, or will not, have the courage to take a prime miniſter. Such an appointment would be equal to a revolution; and, well or ill, would change the whole face of affairs.

The

The Duke of Brunſwick is the perſon who ought to be narrowly watched, if we wiſh to foretel the fate of this government, although he ſhould not be the perſon appointed, and ſhould there be any appearance of a ſhipwreck. This Prince is only fifty, and is indiſputably ambitious. Should he ever reſolve on hazardous and daring deſigns, and ſhould he no longer depend on Pruſſia, he would ſhake all the German combinations as the north wind ſhakes the reed. His manners and his prudence are incompatible with the Engliſh party. Neither can England act on the continent except accidentally. But I can imagine circumſtances under which I think him capable of going over to the Emperor, who would receive him with open arms. And what might not the Duke of Brunſwick perform at the head of the Auſtrian army? How great would be the danger of Germany! How vaſt a proſpect for him whoſe paſſions might be unbridled, ſhould he be obliged to act a deſperate part; for he almoſt hates his ſons, unleſs it be his youngeſt, who promiſes not to be ſo ſtupid

as

as the others * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * * *

* * * * * * * * * *

The beſt manner of ſecuring him has been miſſed, which would have been to have placed him unconditionally at the head of the Germanic confederation. Should he deſert it, I greatly fear he will be its deſtroyer.

Baron H*** is arrived, and has not been received by the King equal to his expectations. A certain muſical demoniac, named Baron Bagge, is alſo at Berlin (*m*). I imagine they are all in too

(*m*) This Baron is a very pleaſant gentleman, at leaſt to the muſical world. He performs on the violin, but ſo vilely, and with ſuch ridiculous vanity, that there is not a great city in Europe in which he is not mimicked by the muſicians; who however take good care to flatter him, and to ſerve whom he devotes his time and his income. His uſual reſidence is at Paris, where he keeps open houſe for all who can hold a fiddle, and does not ſcruple, there and elſewhere, to invite the men who have gained moſt reputation in the practice of their art to take leſſons of him, and acquire abſolute perfection. T.

much

much haſte. The King is in the high fervor of the German ſyſtem, and anxious to have it known that the ſhip is to be differently trimmed. Since his acceſſion, the banker of La Valmour has received orders to ſend in his account, that it may be diſcharged, and to ſtop all future payments to that girl, who had formerly ſo much power over him. It is ſaid he is to return from Potſdam, on the third, and I imagine it will be found that he only goes there to the chace. The Prince of Deſſau is to arrive there to-morrow evening, and I have no doubt there is to be a calling of the faithful (*n*).

(*n*) *Evocation d'ames.* T.

LETTER XLI.

October 30th, 1786.

AT the requeſt of Struenſee I have ſent him the following information. Firſt on the poſſibility of public loans to France, and ſecondly on the treaty of commerce, and on the manner of placing money in the French funds.

There are two ſpecies of public funds in France; thoſe the intereſt of which is fixed and certain, and which does not vary with circumſtances; and thoſe which produce dividends, or a participation of gain, ſubject to viciſſitudes and to riſe or fall.

The public and favoured companies principally appertain to this laſt claſs. Such as the Caiſſe d'eſcompte, the Paris water-works, and French-Eaſt India company; the prices of ſtock in which have ſucceſſively, or all together, been agitated by every phrenzy of ſtock-jobbing. All true,

true eſtimate of their real value and their effective gains has been as it were loſt, that men might yield to the rage of gambling in funds which never could be reduced to any exact evaluation. Theſe jobbers have been leſs occupied by endeavours to reduce the price of ſhares to their true value than artfully to affect their price, by diſputes and pretended reaſonings on the impoſſibility of delivering all the ſhares that had been ſold. Monopoly has ſucceeded to monopoly, aſſociation to aſſociation; ſome to raiſe, others to lower, the price; to effect which every imaginary ſpecies of deceit, cabal, and cunning, has been practiſed; and, though this gambling mania has not continued more than two years, many people have already been ruined; and many others diſhonoured, by taking ſhelter under the laws to elude their engagements.

The other ſpecies of public funds, and the only one perhaps which merits the name, conſiſts in contracts, and royal effects, properly ſo called. The contracts yield an intereſt of from five and a half to

ſix

ſix per cent, at the utmoſt. One only fund, the ſtock of which is paid at ſight, is more productive. This is the loan of one hundred and twenty-five millions. Shares are only ſold, at preſent, at an advance of two per cent, although there are nine months intereſt due, and that the real intereſt amounts to nearly ſeven per cent. The ſtock cannot remain long at this price; and, whether the purchaſers wiſh to be permanent ſtock-holders or only to ſpeculate for ſome months, this loan merits a preference to any other. Its advantages annually increaſe, ſince while receiving a uniform intereſt of five per cent, a part of the capital is to be periodically repaid. In January 1787 and 1788, theſe reimburſements are to be made at the rate of fifteen per cent, on the capital advanced. They are afterward to proceed to pay off twenty per cent, and at intervals of three years to twenty-five, thirty, thirty-five, forty, forty-five, fifty per cent; till, in the laſt year, the whole will be repaid, independent of the intereſt of five per cent. to and including the years of reimburſement,

ment, the laſt year of payment only excepted. The ſtock-holders may either have bills payable at ſight, according to the original plan, or if they pleaſe may receive contracts in their ſtead; without any change taking place in the order of reimburſement.

Thoſe who buy in with a deſign of remaining ſtock-holders muſt prefer contracts, becauſe theſe are neither liable to be ſtolen, burnt, nor deſtroyed. Thoſe who purchaſe ſtock on ſpeculation, intending to ſell out, ſhould rather receive bills, becauſe the transfer would then be ſubject to none of the delays of office.

We ought to regard the public loans of France as at an end, all the debts of the war being paid; ſo that, if any loans henceforth ſhould take place, they can probably be only for ſmall ſums (*o*) to pay off the annual reimburſements, with which the finances will, for five or ſix years to come, be burthened. But theſe loans can

(*o*) The world at that time was ignorant of, nor could it divine, the ſublime invention of gradual and ſucceſſive loans.

only

only offer trifling advantages to the monied men. The rate of intereſt muſt have a natural tendency to fall, becauſe of the general proſperity of the kingdom, and conſequently the loan of one hundred and twenty-five millions preſents the probability of riſing in price; which riſe is each day liable to take place, and which variation cannot be profited by, unleſs ſtock is immediately purchaſed. This probability might even be called a certainty, when on the one part we recollect the nature of the loan, which is the moſt wiſe, ſolid, and advantageous, to the monied men, and in every reſpect the beſt that has ever been imagined; and on the other the concurrence of circumſtances, which all uniting lead us to preſume that the credit of France, and the public confidence in its royal effects, muſt daily increaſe.

On the Commercial Treaty.

It appears that the treaty of commerce is highly acceptable to both parties. The Engliſh perceive in it a vaſt market for

their woollen cloths, wrought cottons, and hardware; we depend on the great exportation of our wines, linens, and cambricks; and probably both nations are right, but under certain modifications, the value of which can only be taught by time.

The treaty, in general, ſeems to have held a principle as ſacred which has too often been miſunderſtood; which is, that moderate duties are the ſole means of preſerving the revenue, and preventing illicit trade. Thus the Engliſh merchandize is rated at from ten to twelve per cent. Should the advantage for ſome years appear to be wholly on the ſide of the Engliſh, ſtill it is evident the French trade will gain ground, ſince nothing can prevent our manufactures gradually imitating the products of Engliſh induſtry; whereas, nature having refuſed ſoil and climate to England, our wines cannot be made there, and in this reſpect the Engliſh muſt always depend on us.

True it is that the wines of Portugal will continue to be drunken in England in great quantities, but the riſing generation

tion will prefer the wines of France. Of this Ireland affords a proof, in which ten times the quantities of French wines are drunken to the wines of Portugal. The French wines henceforth are only to pay duties equivalent to thoſe which the wines of Portugal at preſent pay in England; that is to ſay forty pounds ſterling per ton, or about one ſhilling per bottle. Our wines of Medoc may there be ſold cheap, and will be preferred to the wines of Portugal. The Engliſh, it is true, are allowed to lower the preſent duties on the wines of Portugal, but they will fear to diminiſh them too ſenſibly, leſt they ſhould injure the revenue ariſing from their beer, which is the moſt eſſential of their exciſe duties, and annually produces more than one million, eight hundred thouſand pounds ſterling.

The treaty, in fact, will inconteſtably be advantageous to both countries. It will procure an increaſe of enjoyment to the people, and of revenue to their reſpective Monarchs. Its tendency is to render the Engliſh and French more friendly, and in

general it is founded on thoſe liberal principles which are worthy two ſuch great nations, and of which France ought to be the firſt to give an example, ſince, of all countries on earth, it would, from its natural advantages, be the greateſt gainer, ſhould ſuch principles be univerſally eſtabliſhed in the commercial world.

LETTER XLII.

October 31ſt, 1786.

* * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * *
* * * * * * * * *

They have alſo affirmed (that is Prince Ferdinand has) that it was I who refuted the eſtimate (*p*) of Launay. From that moment I have daily left my card at the houſe of Launay, and have declared that to torment people ſeemed to me to be a thing ſo unneceſſary that, excluſive of the cowardice of wantonly ſtriking a man under misfortunes, none but a fool could have invented ſo ſilly and malicious a tale.

On the reply to the refutation of his eſtimate, Launay received ſo ſevere a letter that he immediately demanded permiſſion to retire. The King anſwered this ſhould be

(*p*) *Compte rendu.* T.

granted him, when the commiſſion ſhould have no more need of his aſſiſtance.

It is loudly rumoured here, after having been long whiſpered, that a treaty is concerting between Ruſſia, Auſtria, and Pruſſia; the pretext for which is the pacification of Holland. I own that at preſent I do not ſee the leaſt probability of truth in the report. Neither the King, nor any of his miniſters, appear to me to have an underſtanding ſufficiently enlarged for ſuch a project. Not but we moſt aſſuredly ought to pay very ſerious attention to the rumour.

As I was finiſhing my phraſe, I received information that Doctor Roggerſon, the favourite phyſician of the Czarina, the ſame whom ſhe ſent to Vienna, and of whom I ſpoke to you in my former diſpatches, is juſt arrived. Now or never is the time for an *eye war*; but this kind of tilting can be performed only by ambaſſadors; they alone poſſeſs the means, were we to exclude every other except the allpuiſſance of ſupper parties, which are the very ſieves of ſecrets.

Roggerſon

Roggerſon returns from England by way of Amſterdam, and Berlin was entirely in his road. Still, I repeat, we ought watchfully to obſerve Vienna and Peterſburg; convinced as I am at preſent that the Emperor is only ſpreading nets for this country. I muſt further add that I imagine I very clearly perceive the gallomania of Prince Henry is on the decline. But this to him will be of no advantage, for it is to oppoſe the Prince that they are Antigallican here. It is not to oppoſe the French that he is oppoſed. Prince Henry is turbulent, falſe, and perfidious. He formerly was ſucceſsful at Peterſburg. He may flatter himſelf that, ſhould there be any need of that court, he may be employed; and never will there be a better reſemblance of the morality of the late Eroſtratus (q).

The Duke of Brunſwick arrived on Saturday at Potſdam. This is a kind of

(q) Meaning the late King, who fired not only temples but would have willingly extended the conflagration to the univerſe, could he have thrown on the oil without being ſcorched by the guſt of the flames. T.

ſecret

ſecret at Berlin. Nothing had been done on Sunday, except liſtening to muſic, and looking at reviews; but two couriers were certainly ſent off, from the Sunday to the Tueſday. I know nothing more. I am in want of pecuniary and other aid. The domeſtic diſorder is a thing ſo inconvenient, ſome of the favourites are ſo intereſted to put an end to it, or to certain parts of it, ſince they have not a ſixpence, and it is carried to ſuch exceſs in the palace, that I cannot help ſuppoſing there is ſome grand object which employs the whole attention of the King, and the few moments he can prevail on himſelf to dedicate to buſineſs.

There has been a quarrel in the houſehold, in which the maſter has committed ſome violence on himſelf. One of his favourite uſhers, Rumpel, a man naturally very inſolent, in ſo much that at a review he once ſtruck a gentleman without any ſerious notice being taken of the affair, has had a very paſſionate brawl with Lindenau, the new firſt uſher, who is a Saxon, and the friend of Biſhopſwerder, who procured

cured him the place. Lindenau put the inſolent favourite under arreſt, and gave an account of his proceeding to the King. The Monarch ſtarted with aſtoniſhment; but, after a momentary ſilence, he not only approved of the act of Lindenau, but confirmed the arreſt in a very cool manner, and for an indefinite term. By this he has given ſome energy to the head ſervants, and ſomewhat tempered the inſolence of the ſubalterns.

Diſcord on the other hand reigns among the favourites. Goltz and Biſhopſwerder had a very ſerious diſpute in Sileſia. The King having made ſome new appointments, in favour of I know not whom, Goltz kept ſo cool a ſilence that the King inſiſted on knowing the reaſon of this tacit diſapprobation. Goltz replied,—"Your "Majeſty is overflowing the land with "Saxons, as if you had not a ſubject of "your own."—Biſhopſwerder came in, a few moments afterward, and propoſed another Saxon, on which the King very abruptly exclaimed—"Zounds you never "propoſe any body but Saxons."—Proba-

bly,

bly, in the explanation which ſucceeded this pettiſhneſs, the King told what Goltz had ſaid. Certain it is that Biſhopſwerder and Goltz have been very warm. The wall is white-waſhed over, but we may with good reaſon conclude that Goltz, the Tartar, and Biſhopſwerder, the debonnaire, neither do nor ever will cordially eſteem each other. It was the latter who brought the inſignificant Duke of Holſteinbeck hither, and who is endeavouring to advance him to the command of the guards, that he may deprive the former favourite Wartenſleben of the place.

To deſcend a ſtep lower, it appears that Chauvier is regaining credit. He imagined, at the beginning of the reign, that the ſurlineſs of the ſecretary would promote his intereſt. It did the reverſe. Apparently he has altered his rout, and is in the pandar department, ſubmits to ſubaltern complaiſance, and even to act the ſpy, in which he finds his account.

The King returns on Wedneſday, as it is ſaid, to depart again on Thurſday. I cannot underſtand what this means, unleſs

leſs it ſhould be to keep Prince Henry at a diſtance, without openly quarrelling. The Prince will remain ignorant of affairs by not knowing where to find the King. The miniſter Blumenthal has rather reſolutely demanded his diſmiſſion, complaining that his Majeſty, having bedizened ſome of his ſervants, who were not of ſo long a ſtanding as himſelf, with ribbands, had not beſtowed on him that mark of honour. His retreat, which is not granted, is a matter of little moment; though it is affirmed the King could not be better pleaſed, for he would then have a place to beſtow. I have heard, and from a good quarter, that this place, or rather a place of principal truſt, will very ſoon be given to a remarkable man, to the diſſatisfaction of every body. I can neither divine who this man is nor believe the King has the fortitude to diſſatisfy every body. The credit of Hertzberg, if not ruined, is ſtill on the decline. It is certain that he has not dined with the King ſince the return from Sileſia.

Welner is at Potſdam.

Do

Do not ſuffer your ambaſſador to perſuade you that there is nothing to apprehend from Auſtria: I am convinced the King is undetermined, that the Emperor is ſounding him, and that there is ſomething in agitation with which we are unacquainted. For my own part, nothing would appear leſs extraordinary to me. I own I am ſurprized at all the intelligence I obtain, however little that all may be. But nothing can here be kept ſecret from a French ambaſſador, who is neither in want of money nor induſtry.

I have juſt been told that General Rodig has ſent a challenge to Count Goertz. I have not learnt what was the cauſe of quarrel, and the truth of the news ſcarcely appears to be probable; yet it comes from a perſon who ſhould know, though he is a young man.

END OF VOL. I.

00037574

Digitized with financial assistance from the
Government of Maharashtra
on 25 June, 2016